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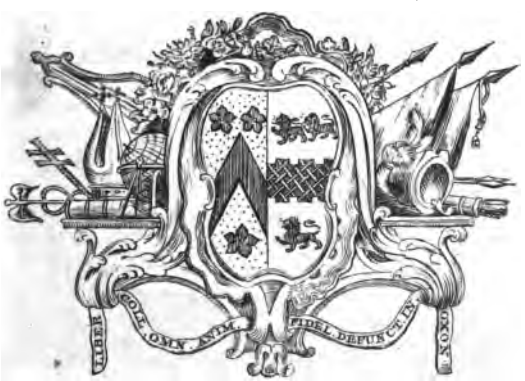

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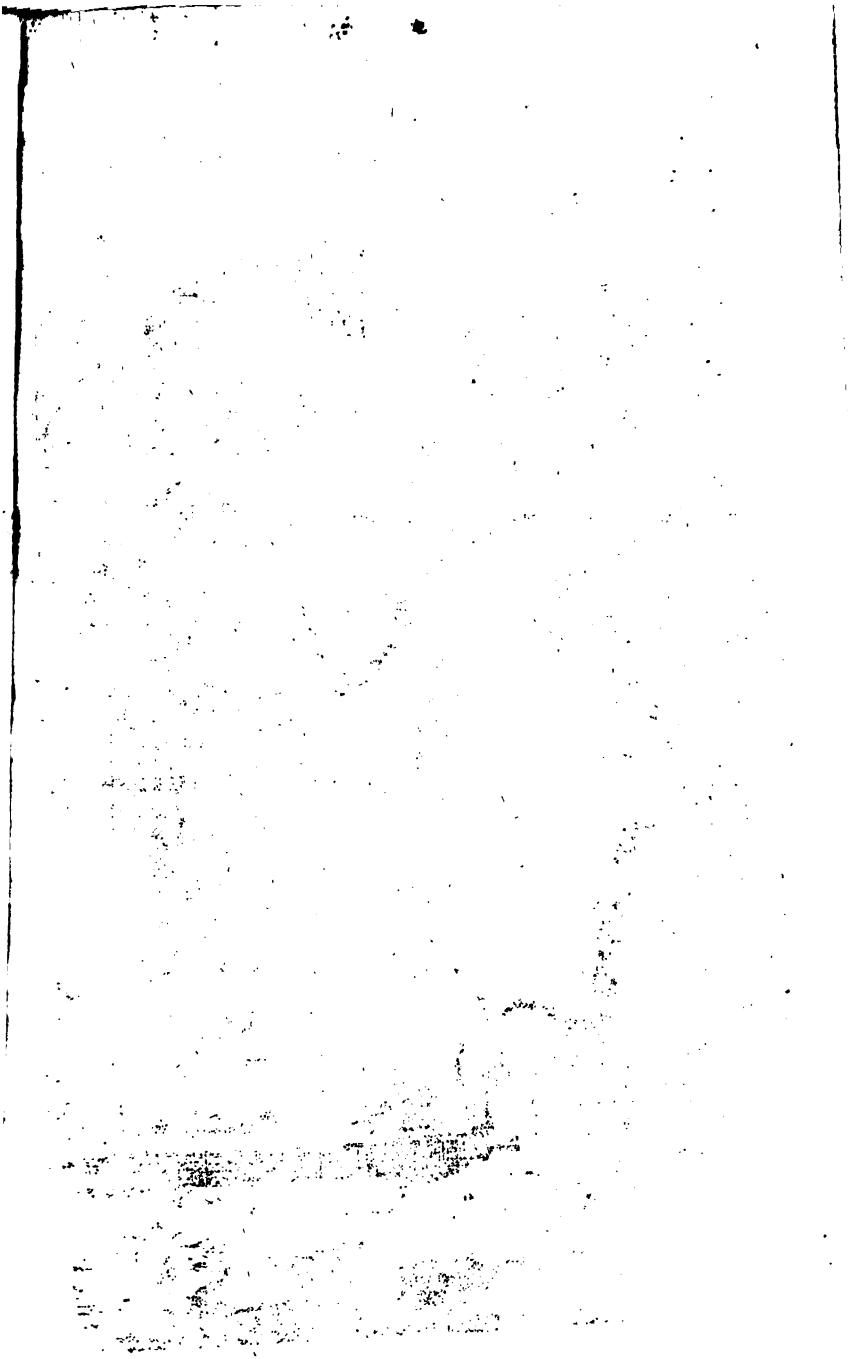

A TREATISE
AGAINST
IMPURITY
Chast
Body

The Nature of

Uncleanneſs

CONSIDER'D:

Wherein is diſcourſed of the Cauſes and Conſequences of this Sin, and the Duties of ſuch as are under the Guilt of it.

To which is added, A

DISCOURSE

Concerning the Nature of

CHASTITY,

And the Means of Obtaining it.

By *J. F. OSTERVALD*, Miniſter of the Church of *Neufchâtel*, Author of *A Treatiſe of the Cauſes of the preſent Corruption of Chriſtians*, *A Catechiſm*, &c.

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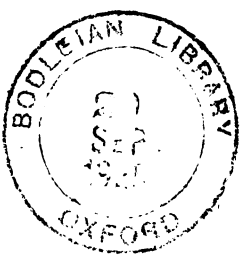
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TO THE READER.

THE following Diſcourſe was written, as the Title-Page imports, by the Learned and Judicious Mr. *Oſtervald*, Preacher in *Swiſſerland*, at *Neuſchâtel* as the *French*, or as the *Germans* call it *Newenburg*, a City with a ſmall Principality belonging to it; and upon this account a Place of ſome Note, eſpecially at preſent, becauſe of the Diſputes that have been of late, and are not yet wholly compoſed, concerning the Sovereignty of it. And he is not only an Author of great Fame there, but in his neighbouring City of *Geneva*, and other Places. And in our own Nation he is not only had in great Eſteem, for the particular Reſpect he has ſhewn to the *Engliſh* Liturgy, and his Endeavours to introduce a like Worſhip amongſt his Neighbours, but for his excellent Writings likewiſe; which have no ſooner appeared amongſt us, but they have been received with a general Applauſe. His *Treatiſe of* the Cauſes of the preſent Corruption of Chriſtians, and the Remedies thereof, was quickly cried up, and admired by the beſt Judges of ſolid Reaſon, and ſound Divinity,

and was presently publish'd in our own Tongue, for the Benefit of such as understand not the *French* Language.

His *Catechetical Discourse* likewise explaining **the Grounds and Principles of the Christian Religion,** did not only meet with a hearty Welcome here; but was soon Translated into *English*, by the Ingenious Mr. *Wanly*; and Revised by the Reverend and Learned Doctor *Stanhope* Dean of *Canterbury*, at the Request of *the Society for Propagating Religion:* And met with such Approbation from the *Corporation De Promovendo Evangelio*, that their Missionaries are all Ordered to take their Share of its Copies along with them into the Foreign Plantations, whither they are sent. Which, considering the Nature of this Illustrious Society, that it consists of Persons of diverse, and some of them of the Highest Ranks and Degrees, both Ecclesiastical and others, all the Prelates, and many of the chief Dignitaries, and others of Note among the Clergy, and many of the Nobility and Gentlemen of Quality and great Worth, I take to be a noble Testimony to its Value, and a singular Recommendation of it, as highly useful to the Ends whereto it was designed, the Promotion of God's Glory, and Instruction of the Pious and Well-disposed Readers, especially those of the Younger Sort.

And this Discourse here published, being not only the same Author's, but well worthy of Him too, it is to be hoped, will not meet with

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a leſs favourable Reception than thoſe that have gone before it: Eſpecially conſidering the Subjects handled in it, *Uncleanneſs*, and *Chaſtity*, both of them of very great Importance, and yet concerning which leſs has been written, either in our Own or Foreign Languages, than of moſt other Vices or Virtues. The moſt probable Cauſe of which Defect, I take to be what Himſelf aſſigns in the beginning of his Preface, namely, *The Nature of the Subject*, and the Difficulty of managing it with ſuch Prudence and Caution, as neither to omit what is neceſſary to be ſaid, nor to ſay any thing that the Luſtful and Licentious may not turn to Sport and Ridicule, or to ſome farther Improvement in their Vice.

For it is too plain, as Biſhop *Taylor* obſerves, in his *Rules and Exerciſes of Holy Living*, Sect. 2. Chap. 2. *That there are ſome Spirits ſo Atheiſtical, and ſome ſo wholly poſſeſſed with a Spirit of Uncleanneſs, that they turn the moſt prudent and chaſt Diſcourſes into Dirt, and filthy Apprehenſions; like Cholerick Stomachs, changing their very Cordials and Medicines into Bitterneſs, and in a literal ſenſe turning the Grace of God into Wantonneſs. They ſtudy Caſes of Conſcience* (as he proceeds) *in the Caſe of Carnal Sins, not to avoid, but to learn ways how to offend God, and pollute their own Spirits, and ſearch their Houſes with a Sun-beam, that they may be inſtructed in all the corners of Naſtineſs.* Hence he cautions his Reader, as I beg leave to intreat of mine, that he will make a ſtop, and

not proceed to *the following Advices, unleſs he be of a Chaſt Spirit, or deſire to be Chaſt, or at leaſt be apt to conſider whether he ought or no.*

And I doubt not but this ſhameful Corruption of Mankind, and the ill Uſe that is frequently made of the moſt ſerious and beſt-weighed Inſtructions, and Exhortations, that can be given, in relation to that Purity both of Heart and Life, which our Lord requires of his Diſciples, has been a principal Cauſe of the Scarcity of Books upon this, above moſt other Moral Duties. It is not to be ſuppoſed, that either Preachers or Writers have had leſs Concern for the Promotion of Chaſtity, than of other Virtues; but only that they have been diſcouraged from the Conſideration of it, by an Apprehenſion, that too many would be ready to pervert whatever ſhould be propoſed, though with all the tenderneſs and caution that might be, to a wrong Purpoſe.

Yet never was more need of Diſcourſes of this nature than now, when Wickedneſs appears bare-fac'd, and too many are neither afraid nor aſhamed to glory in it; as if it were a piece of Bravery, or a Jeſting Matter, to bid Defiance to the Almighty, and daringly provoke him to his Face. When People come to this height of Impiety, it is high time to warn them of their exceſſive Folly and Danger, and to intreat and beſeech them to bethink themſelves in time, leſt the Wrath of God break forth upon them, and there be no eſcaping. This is a dreadful Caſe, and may juſtly be expected

to

to bring down heavy Judgments upon a People, where theſe Iniquities prevail, to make their Land mourn, and the Inhabitants thereof languiſh, or poſſibly, as it fared with God's own choſen People the Jews, to let them be no more a Nation.

Were they only the common and more ordinary Sins of this kind, ſuch as Adultery, Fornication, &c. that we have cauſe to complain of, theſe would miſerably expoſe us to the terrible Indignation of the Almighty, and the dire Effects of it. But to our Sorrow and Shame it muſt be confeſs'd, that yet more grievous Abominations are found amongſt us, ſuch as our Country had only heard of in former Ages, but which make too ſad a noiſe in this, to the Terror and Aſtoniſhment of all the Faithful in the Land. *Shall not the Lord viſit for theſe things? Shall not his Soul be avenged on ſuch a Nation as this?*

Some Endeavours, bleſſed be God, have been uſed for preventing his impending Judgments, by a Proſecution and Puniſhment of Offenders in this kind. But, alas! unleſs others will take warning by theſe Proceedings, and will be reclaimed from their horrid Wickedneſs, there will ſtill be too juſt reaſon to look upon our ſelves as in dangerous Circumſtances. God's Hand already lies heavy upon us. A long and expenſive War has very much exhauſted our Stores; a decay of Trade has ſadly leſſened our Incomes; Parties and Diviſions have ſet us at odds, and filled our Minds with Jealouſies and Animo-

Animoſities; the daily encreaſe of our Wants have multiplied Thievery, Violence, Extortion, and other Inſtances of Injuſtice; our Loſſes by Sea, and Diſappointments by Land, call loudly upon us to attend to our Condition, to amend our Ways and our Doings, to humble our ſelves before God, and to ſue to him for Mercy and Pardon, whereby to try if he will be intreated to *hear from Heaven, and forgive our Sins, and heal our Land.*

And to make us the more ſenſible of our Duty in this reſpect, I thought it might be uſeful to publiſh this Serious and Pious Diſcourſe in our own Language, to caution Perſons againſt the Sins here condemned, and excite and teach them how to get rid of them. And how were it poſſible for any to indulge themſelves in theſe ſcandalous Immoralities, if they did well conſider with themſelves, how heinous a Sin *Uncleanneſs* is, and what are the terrible Effects of it, how it defiles the Body, diſturbs the Mind, ruines Mens Eſtates and Reputation here, and is the ready way to Ever-laſting Deſtruction hereafter?

How wretched and deplorable the State of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, and the Cities about them was, when they *ſuffered the vengeance of Eternal Fire*, as St. *Jude* ſpeaks, *ver.* 7th, none can doubt. As neither can it be queſtion'd whether their filthy and unnatural Luſts were the Occaſion of ſo ſevere a Deſtruction. *They gave themſelves up to vile Affections, to work thoſe things which are unſeemly*, to the groſſeſt and moſt enormous

enormous Lewdneſſes; and though God bare with them for a time, he would not do it always, but at length allotted them that recompence of their Wickedneſs which it ſo loudly called for. For, * *The Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah Brimſtone and Fire from the Lord out of Heaven. And he overthrew thoſe Cities, and all the Plain, and all the Inhabitants of the Cities, and that which grew upon the Ground,* to ſuch a degree, that they have ever ſince remained (*a*) lamentable Examples of the Divine Juſtice, for the Terror of all ſucceeding Generations. And can we hope to eſcape better than they, if their intolerable Wickedneſs be found amongſt us? Our Bleſſed Saviour has taught us, That the Caſe of ſinful Chriſtians will be far worſe than theirs at the Day of Judgment, St. *Matth.* xi. 20, *&c.* And I know not how any can promiſe themſelves it ſhall not be ſo in the mean time too. I am ſure that if this Vice, rarely heard of in theſe Parts till of late Years, be not rooted out from amongſt us, it will forebode ſome heavy Vengeance to befall us, and God only knows how ſoon. *If we will not hearken* and reform, *but will walk thus contrary to the Lord, he will walk contrary to us in fury, and will chaſtiſe us yet ſeven times more for our Sins.*

* Gen. 19. 24, 25.

This Crime, as one juſtly deſcribes it, is in it ſelf monſtrous and unnatural, in its Practice filthy, and odious to extremity; its Guilt is crying, and its Conſequences ruinous. It de-

(*a*) Joſeph. Ἰουδ. ἀλω. l. 4. c. 27. Tacit. Hiſt. l. 5. p. 427. Ed. Lipſ. Solin. Polyhiſt. c. 48.

ſtroys

ſtroys Conjugal Affection, perverts Natural Inclination, and tends to extinguiſh the hope of Poſterity.

Another heinous Inſtance of Uncleanneſs, is *Adultery*; a complicated Wickedneſs, contrary to the expreſs Prohibition of Almighty God, in the VIIth Commandment, to the Doctrine of the Prophets, and to that of our Bleſſed Saviour and his Apoſtles in the New Teſtament, contrary to the Faith ſolemnly given at Marriage, contrary to the Intent of that holy Ordinance, contrary to Natural Juſtice, by the Damage done to the injur'd Party, and eſpecially to the Husband, by a Spurious Iſſue, whereby himſelf and his Children are wrong'd, poſſibly his whole Eſtate, or at leaſt a conſiderable, perhaps the greateſt part of it, is ſwallowed up by a Stranger; and which is notoriouſly deſtructive of that mutual Affection Husband and Wife ought to have for, and that Comfort and Satisfaction they were deſigned to take in each other.

The very Heathens had ſuch an abhorrence of this Sin, that they annexed divers ſevere Penalties to it. Sometimes (*a*) they allowed whomſoever that ſhould take any in the Fact, to kill them; and (*b*) the Woman, if not killed, was to be expoſed to the utmoſt Shame. Sometimes (*c*) the Husband might put the

(*a*) Heraclid. de Polit. apud. Ælian. var. Hiſt. p. 441. (*b*) Ib. p. 447. (*c*) A Gell. l. 10. c. 23.

Wife

Wife ſo taken to Death, or (*d*) might puniſh the Man in ſuch a manner as effectually to prevent their coming together again, and (*e*) might moſt grievouſly torment him.

Among the Ancient Jews, (*f*) *Adultery* was puniſhed with Death, and by God's own Appointment. And though in time they came not to have it in their power (*g*) to inflict Death upon Offenders againſt their Law, (*a*) they however decreed, and accordingly made uſe of, other ſevere Methods of handling Tranſgreſſors in this kind; whereby both to teſtifie their Deteſtation of this Vice, and to affright Perſons from daring to venture upon it.

And amongſt Chriſtians, it has been reckoned ſo heinouſly offenſive to Almighty God, that Divines have thought one ſingle deliberate Act of it, equal in Guilt to a Habit of ſome leſſer Sins. And our Author, in his Book of *the Cauſes of Corruption* (*b*), couples this Sin with Apoſtacy from Chriſtianity, and affirms one ſingle Act of it to put a Man out of a State of Salvation. *Tertullian* (*c*) repreſents it as worſe than denying the Faith in times of

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(*d*) Plaut. Mil. Glorioſ. Act. 5. (*e*) Juv. Sat. 10. v. 315, 316. (*f*) Levit. 20. 10. (*g*) St. Jo. 18. 31. (*a*) Burt. Synag. Jud. c. 47. (*b*) Il y a certains Pechez ſi atroces, comme l'Adultére, l'Apoſtaſie, dans les quels il n'arrive gueres à un homme de tomber plus d'un fois, à moins qu'il ne ſoit tout-a-fait mechant; mais icy un ſeul de ces pechez eſt incompatible avec l'eſtat de regeneration. Par. 1. Sous. 4. p. 164. (*c*) Nemo volens negare compellitur, nemo nolens fornicatur: nulla ad libidinem vis eſt, niſi ipſa ——— Quis magis negavit, qui Chriſtum vexatus, an qui delectatus amiſit? Tert. de Pudic. c. 22.

Perſecu-

Perſecution, becauſe not extenuated by thoſe Fears and Penalties that occaſion ſuch a Denial. And according to the Meaſures of the Primitive Diſcipline, (*d*) the Holy Communion was denied to Adulterers for Seven Years together, (*e*) ſometimes much longer; and ſometimes (*f*) they were never to be received into Communion, not even at the Point of Death.

And as to their Worldly Concerns, it is ordinarily ſeen, (*a*) that Adulterers ſuffer no ſmall Inconvenience by their Lewd and Vicious manner of Life, but meet with all the ſeveral Miſchiefs, and more than, I ſhall have occaſion to mention under the next Head. So that the Wiſeman had abundant reaſon upon this account for his Aſſertion, *Prov.* vi. 32, 33. that *Whoſoever committeth Adultery with a Woman, lacketh Underſtanding; he that doth it deſtroyeth his own Soul. A Wound and Diſhonour ſhall he get, and his Reproach ſhall not be wiped away.*

Fornication likewiſe is a Sin, not only abominable in the Sight of God, but hated alſo and abhorred by all wiſe and good Men; and that proves of very pernicious conſequence in this preſent Life. It is not ſo injurious as this laſt named, and has not therefore altogether

(*d*) Albaſp. Obſervat. l. 2. c. 17, 18. & Concil. Ancyr. Can. 20. (*e*) Greg. Nyſſ. Ep. ad Letoium. (*f*) B. Cypr. Ep. 55. ad Antonian.

(*a*) Οἱ ὑπὸ Ἐπικύρου ἢ διὰ τοῦτο ἢ μοιχεύσαντ, ὅτε ἀπέχεν θ, τῇ μοιχεύειν, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ ναυμαχίαν τελεῖν ἢ πόλεμον· πολλὰ δὲ ἐπαγωγὰ κωλυτικὰ ἦσαν τοῦ ἐξεῖναι μιᾷ τῇ τοῦ μοιχεύειν ἡδονῇ, &c. Orig. com. Celſ. l. 7. p. 374.

ſo

ſo many Difficulties and Dangers attending it; but yet it opens a Door for ſo many dreadful Evils, as may well deterr all from it, who are not willing to run blindfold upon their own Deſtruction. It is frequently known to ſubject Perſons to divers acute Pains and loathſom Diſeaſes, to waſt their Spirits, impair their Vitals, corrupt their Fleſh, rot their Bones; to deform themſelves, conſume their Eſtates, and *bring them to a morſel of Bread*; is a great Reproach and Diſgrace to them, cauſes many deſperate Quarrels, and upon theſe and other-like accounts becomes a means of ſhortening their Days, and often-times of tranſmitting Poverty, and Shame, and an unhealthy Conſtitution to their Poſterity. It makes Men ſoft and effeminate, and is full of Cares and Fears, and attended with Uneaſineſs and Diſcontent, Jealouſy and Diſtruſt, impatient Deſires, and yet perplexing Delays and Diſappointments; and the End of it is ordinarily (*a*) Grief and Repentance. It puts its Vaſſals upon the vileſt and moſt ſhameleſs Contrivances and Attempts, for compaſſing their Deſign, and ſatisfying their Luſt. It keeps them (*b*) in perfect Slavery, and tempts them to live more like Beaſts than Men. It renders them a Peſt and Plague to their Neighbours, a Shame and

(*a*) Demoſthenes Laidi, Ego, inquit, pœnitere tanti non emo. Aul. Gel. l. 1. c. 8. (*b*) Ὁ δὲ πόρνος ἁμαρτίας ἀθλιώτερος δοῦλος· βόρβορον γὰρ ἀγαπᾷ παρ' αὐτῆς τεταλμένος, μολυσμῷ συνάγει σωρὸν, καὶ ἀκάθαρτον λειτουργεῖ ἐργασίαν. Greg. Nyſſ. Orat. cont. Fornicarios.

Affliction

Affliction to their Relations, and irreconcileable Enemies to their own Welfare, whether with reſpect to the Quiet of their Minds, the Eaſe and Health of their Bodies, or the Succeſs of their Affairs and Concerns in the World; all which are very often entirely ruined by it. And whatſoever good Qualities they may have otherwiſe, this one infamous ungovernable Appetite clouds and ſadly obſcures them all. It is a Sin that not only Chriſtians have abundant reaſon to deteſt and renounce, but which divers in the Heathen World would rather die than yield to; as others alſo, when over-power'd, againſt their own Wills and utmoſt Endeavours to the contrary, would not ſuffer themſelves to ſurvive ſuch Abuſe. Of which there are many Inſtances, and St. *Jerom* men-
* Cap. 26. tions ſeveral of them * in his Firſt Book againſt *Jovinian*.

Polygamy (*a*) is another branch of the Sin here condemned, as our Author well obſerves, *Part* 1. *p.* 11, 12. which though ſometimes practiſed among the *Jews*, is by no means lawful amongſt Chriſtians. Our Saviour declares it to be Adultery, for a Man to put away his Wife, and marry another, St. *Luke* xvi. 18. And it cannot be more conſiſtent with the Doctrine and Laws of the Goſpel, with the Na-

(*a*) Τῷ γὰρ ἀνθρώπῳ μία δίδοται γυνὴ παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ βοηθὸς, καὶ τῇ γυναικὶ μία ἐφήμοσται παρὰ ἀνδρός. Id. ad Letoïnum.

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ture and Ends of Matrimony, with the mutual Obligation then ſolemnly entred into, or with the Husband's Relation to his Wife, with whom he is pronounced * *one Fleſh*, to take another without putting her away. All ſuch Contracts therefore are no better than meer Deluſions, whereby to deceive and quiet an uneaſie Conſcience, and do not prevent the Guilt of the Converſation conſequent upon them. They are but another Species of Adultery, and are to be look'd upon and conſtantly avoided as ſuch. There is a remarkable Note of the learned Dr. *Whitby* to this purpoſe, in his Commentary upon 1 *Cor.* vii. 4. *The Wife hath not power over her own Body, but the Husband: and likewiſe alſo the Husband hath not power of his own Body, but the Wife.* "Here (ſaith "the Doctor) is a plain Argument againſt "*Polygamy*; for if the Man hath not power "over his own Body, he cannot give the "power of it to another, and ſo cannot marry "another; nor could the Wife, excluſively "to him, have the power of his Body, if he "could give it to another." In ſhort, † God at firſt inſtituted Marriage between one Man and one Woman; and whatſoever Abuſes had crept in afterwards in this reſpect our Saviour took care to rectifie, and reſtored it to its original Inſtitution, ſo to remain to the World's end. And there is no going contrary to this, without offering apparent violence to God's own Appointment, and the Ends and Obligations of the former Marriage, and conſequently

* Epheſ. 5. 31.

† Gen. 2. 22. & St. Matth. 19. 4.

ſequently (*a*) not without incurring the dreadful Guilt of Adultery.

Near of kin to Polygamy, is *Concubinage* *, and equally unlawful amongſt Chriſtians. Our Saviour gives no manner of Countenance to it in his Goſpel. And his Apoſtle St. *Paul* forbids Uncleanneſs in ſuch a manner, as to make *Marriage* and *Touching a Woman* equivalent Phraſes, and to teach, That (*b*) *out of Marriage all is Sinful.* As our Author has fully ſhewn, *Part* I. *Sect.* I. *Ch.* 5.

Inceſt is another egregious Violation of the Laws of Chaſtity, and heinouſly provoking in the Sight of God. It was this coſt *Amnon* his Life, 2 *Sam.* xiii. 22; and will be ſure to bring down a far greater Deſtruction upon all that take not care to refrain from it. The Ignorant (*c*) *Perſians* might more eaſily allow themſelves in it; but Chriſtians ſhould be mindful that they are utterly inexcuſable, if they have but an Inclination to, and Deſire of it in their Heart.

And again, *Self-Pollution* is another Unnatural and Dangerous Species of *Uncleanneſs*.

(*a*) Divina Lex ita Duos in Matrimonium, quod eſt in corpus unum, pari jure conjungit, ut adulter habeatur, quiſquis compagem corporis in diverſa diſtraxerit. Lact. Inſtit. l. 6. c. 23.

* Concubina eſt mulier quæ conſuetudinis, non matrimonii causâ retinetur, *&c.* Calv. Lexic. Jurid.

(*b*) Quiſquis affectus illos frœnare non poteſt, cohibeat eos intra præſcriptum legitimi Tori, *&c.* Lact. Inſtit. c. 23.

(*c*) Πέρσαι μὲν γὰρ ἐκ παίδων ἤγωνται, συγκλεῖ μίγνυσθαι. Diog. Laert. l. 9. in Vitâ Pyrrhonis.

This

This we ſee remarkably puniſh'd in *Onan*, by a particular Stroke from Almighty God. For it is not to be thought that his Guilt lay totally in not raiſing up Seed to his deceaſed Brother *Er*, though that was a very conſiderable Aggravation of it; but the way he took to prevent it, would have been highly culpable at any other time. As it was, it proved ſo intolerable a Provocation, that Almighty God could not bear with it, and therefore immediately cut him off by reaſon of it: *Gen.* xxxviii. 10. *The thing which he did diſpleaſed the Lord, wherefore he ſlew him alſo.*

Nor, laſtly, is the Duty of Chaſtity violated only by Laſcivious and Impure Actions, but by *Filthy and Obſcene Diſcourſe*, which is not only a certain token of a corrupt Heart, but often-times proves an inducement to farther degrees of Wickedneſs, and is what no good Chriſtian can poſſibly allow himſelf in: And again, by *Luſtful Thoughts and Deſires*, which our Bleſſed Lord declares to be a leſſer Inſtance of *Adultery*, and which are certainly very highly offenſive to Almighty God, and no leſs dangerous to all who are chargeable with them; St. *Matth.* v. 28. *Whoſoever looketh upon a Woman to luſt after her, hath committed adultery with her Already in his heart.*

There are ſome other Inſtances alſo of Wantonneſs and Impurity, which all Chriſtians are concerned to beware of; as the *Reader* will

ſee by the following Excellent *Diſcourſe* (*a*), to which I referr him for them.

All I deſign farther, is only to offer ſome few other Arguments, in order to the Cure of this dangerous and ſhameful Vice.

And here I might begin with preſſing Perſons to reflect upon the many Miſchiefs already noted as naturally conſequent upon *Uncleanneſs*, even in this World, with reſpect to their Souls, Bodies, Reputation, Eſtates, and even their own Lives, and their Poſterity after them. Which if ſeriouſly and attentively conſider'd, will readily appear of that pernicious Influence, that every one muſt preſently ſee, the gratifying a Brutiſh Affection can never be worth all this Miſery. And here let not Perſons delude themſelves. They may poſſibly think to manage their Lewdneſs ſo, as to have the Pleaſure they deſire, without incurring the evil Conſequents that ſo frequently attend it. But if ever they be ſo hardy as to make the Attempt, they will be in great danger of finding themſelves groſly miſtaken, and that theſe vain Hopes will fail them, and they will then ſee their Folly when 'tis too late. For when once Men allow themſelves in any Lewd, Intemperate Courſe, daily Experience ſhews how it captivates their Underſtandings, and gets the Aſcendant over their Wills, and carries them much farther than they ever intended, or had any apprehenſion of. When they have

(*a*) *Eſpecially* Part I. Sect. 1. chap. 7.

begun

begun to give way to their vicious Inclinations, these are apt to grow upon them, and become more and more impetuous, and never to give over, till they have got the mastery over them; and then no one knows whither they will carry them. All their Resolutions of Prudence and Management are apt to fail them, and they quickly find, to their cost, how much wiser, and safer, and better upon all accompts it had been to have rejected the first Temptation to their Wickedness. For at best, this Vice usually carries Persons on, by degrees, till they are got beyond Recovery; but sometimes it is quicker in its Operation, and ruines them, and exposes their Vanity and Folly in a very little time. This our Blessed Saviour gives us a lively Representation of, in the Parable of the *Prodigal Son*, who having received his Portion from his Father, and probably a large one, went at a good distance, where his Father might have no knowledge of his Doings, and soon spent all, (*a*) ζῶν ἀσώτως, in Riotous Living, in great (*b*) Profuseness, (*c*) Lust, and (*d*) Intemperance. But then the Effect hereof was, that in a little time he brought himself into so distressed a Condition, that he was forced to undertake one of the meanest of Employments, to feed Swine; and,

(*a*) St. Luke 15. 13. (*b*) Ἐσὶ δ' ἡ μὲν ἀσωτία καὶ ἡ ἀνελευθερία περὶ χρήματα ὑφέλαι καὶ ἐλλείψεις. Aristot. ad Nicom. l. 4. c. 1. (*c*) Τὰς γὰρ ἀπεχθείας καὶ εἰς ἀκολασίαν δαπανηρὰς ἀσώτους καλοῦμεν. Ibid. (*d*) Ἀσώτως, intemperanter. Mald. in loc. Ἀσώτως, prodigaliter, intemperanter, libidinosè, lascivè. Corn. à Lap.

which was worſe, to want bare Neceſſaries for a Subſiſtence, and even (*e*) to wiſh that he might *fill his Belly with the Husks that the Swine did eat; and yet no Man did give unto him.* This was the ſad Effect of his Exceſs; and they that imitate him in his Vices, muſt expect the like uncomfortable Attendants upon them. Which one Conſideration, one would think, were a ſufficient Caution againſt a Luſtful Courſe of Life, to all who are deſirous of their own Welfare and Happineſs in this World.

But this is incomparably the leſſer part of what I have to urge againſt this Vice. For if we conſider ourſelves as Chriſtians ſolemnly dedicated to God at Baptiſm, and who muſt be Judged by Him at the Laſt Day, theſe Meditations will plead much more ſtrongly for an utter Abhorrence of it, and a conſtant Care never to come within the Verges of it; and particularly upon theſe following Accounts.

1. All *Uncleanneſs* is a palpable Violation of our Baptiſmal Covenant, wherein we ſolemnly obliged ourſelves to renounce the Fleſh, (that is to ſay, all Senſuality and Voluptuouſneſs) aſwell as the World and the Devil. For there is no living up to this Profeſſion and Obligation, without being continually upon our guard againſt all thoſe ſinful Luſts which we have thus renounced. And indeed, what an Affront

(*e*) Ibid. v. 16.

is

is it to our Lord, and what vile Treachery and breach of Covenant, when Perſons have thus given up their Names to Chriſt, and promiſed to obey his holy Laws, and, in particular, to abſtain from all Impurity, if they ſhall yet draw back; and profeſſing to know God, ſhall in Works deny him, living in Wantonneſs and Unlawful Pleaſures, like the Gentiles who knew him not, or rather in ſuch deteſtable Lewdneſſes as the wiſer amongſt theſe would have abominated? We cannot doubt but that we are all ſtrictly engaged to * *cleanſe ourſelves from all Filthineſs both of Fleſh and Spirit, and to perfect Holineſs in the Fear of God.* And what a monſtrous Incongruity muſt it be, for ſuch to indulge themſelves in any Carnal and Senſual Immoralities, in direct oppoſition to the Vow ſo ſolemnly made againſt them! This muſt neceſſarily argue a great Stupidity and Regardleſneſs of their Duty; which were ſufficiently blameable in any, but in Chriſtians who pretend to tread in their Saviour's Steps, and to obey all his Commandments, is moſt exceedingly provoking.

* 2 Cor. 7. 1.

2. *Uncleanneſs* is a frequent Occaſion of many other Sins. From what hath been ſaid, it evidently appears to be heinouſly offenſive in itſelf, without any of thoſe aggravating Circumſtances that often-times attend it, and inhance its Guilt. But it muſt needs ſeem much more ſo, when taken in conjunction with thoſe other Sins which often-times flow

from it, and are the unhappy Conſequents of it: ſuch as Profuſeneſs, Lying, Falſe Oaths, Quarrels, and Slaughter; ſome of which it makes uſe of for compaſſing its Deſigns, others for concealing them, and others upon the diſcovery of them. The Luſtful Perſon breaks through all Impediments that lie in his way, to obſtruct the Accompliſhment of what he aims at. And tho' never ſo many Sins muſt be committed before he can bring his Ends about, he will very hardly ſuffer himſelf to be withheld by the fear of them. He will ſeek to deceive, will Proteſt, and Swear, and Vow, what he does not believe to be true, or never intends to perform; will Quarrel and Fight, and ſo venture the taking away another's Life, or loſing his own. The like Methods he will be ready to flie to afterwards for hiding his Wickedneſs, ſticking at no ſort of indirect Means whereby to keep his Shame from being known. And if however he find himſelf miſtaken, and his Sin is brought to light, and himſelf either reproached with it, or call'd in queſtion about it, with what Lyes and Perjuries, what Subornation and Falſe-Witneſs will he endeavour to juſtifie himſelf? Beſides that this Sin frequently tempts to the Murdering of Children thus brought into the World; and then again to the Practice of all the foremention'd Iniquities, in order to the concealment of this. And, oh! how egregiouſly heinous, how dreadfully dangerous, how exceedingly unbecoming the Chriſtian Profeſſion, and how intolerably

intolerably provoking in the Sight of God, muſt ſuch a Maſs of Wickedneſs be. A Sin that is big with ſo many others, and moſt of them of ſo flagitious a nature, calls upon all to be very watchful that they be not betrayed into it. I grant, all that commit this Sin, do not fall into all thoſe others likewiſe: But ſince too many do, and none that indulge themſelves in this, are ſure they ſhall not, common Prudence would direct by all means to refrain from it. When *David* committed his Adultery with *Bathſheba*, it is not to be imagined that he had any Deſign upon *Uriah*'s Life; and yet the taking away of this, prov'd to be the Event of it. So *Herod*'s Familiarity with his Siſter-in-Law *Herodias*, was the original Cauſe of St. *John Baptiſt*'s being Beheaded. And whoſoever once begins with this Sin, may certainly depend upon it, that he knows not when or where he ſhall end.

3. Another peculiar Aggravation of this Sin, above all others I know of, is, that moſt of the Inſtances of it are ſuch wherein the Sinner cannot be wicked alone. Other Iniquities Men may commit by themſelves; but here, for the moſt part, two muſt inevitably concurr, and muſt be Partners of each other's Guilt, and muſt expect to ſuffer for it accordingly. St. *Paul* charges *Timothy*, *Not to partake of other Men's Sins, but to keep himſelf pure*, 1 Tim. v. 22. But in no caſe is ſuch a Caution more needful, than in this before us; there being

no

no readier or fairer way to contract a ſhare in another's Guilt, than by engaging them in the Luſts of Uncleanneſs. *Gregory Nyſſen* (*a*) obſerves of Rapine, Envy, Slander, and Murder, That they do not ſo affect the Doer, as him againſt whom they are levelled, or on whom they are acted. So that a Covetous Man may get what is another's, without loſing his own; and a Bloodthirſty Man may kill another, without hurting his own Body: but he that defiles another by Fornication, cannot poſſibly be undefiled himſelf. I add, That he cannot commit this Sin, without having both his own and the other's Crime to anſwer for; and therefore not without involving two Souls at one and the ſame time in the ſame Guilt and Ruine. And by conſequence, he is a deadly Enemy both to himſelf and his Accomplice, and, under a pretence of Kindneſs, expoſes both to dreadful and intolerable Evils both in this World, and in that which is to come.

Nor does he always ſtop here, but many times contrives Ways to draw in others beſides, either in order to the gaining the Conſent of the Accomplice, or helping to Opportunities for his Wickedneſs, or perhaps afterwards for aſſiſting in the making away with the Iſſue of it, or at leaſt in the concealment of ſuch Murder. In all which Caſes, he not only betrays all Perſons ſo employed into a

(*a*) De Fornicat. fugiend.

great

great meaſure of Guilt, but thereby likewiſe miſerably encreaſes his own. And if this one Sin alone, without any ſuch Aggravation, had been enough to ruine him beyond Recovery; how ſad muſt his Caſe be, when he reflects, how much worſe he has made it by this means, and how many others alſo he has brought into the like Ruine with himſelf? Certainly a Sin of thus deſtructive a nature, gives fair Warning to all that will in the leaſt conſider it, to flie from it with greater Averſion, than from a Lion or a Tyger, or whatſoever the moſt rapacious Beaſt of Prey.

4. *Uncleanneſs* has this peculiar Charge, againſt it, That the Apoſtle St. *Paul* declares it to be in an eſpecial manner againſt our own Bodies. *Flee Fornication*, ſays the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* vi. 18. *Every Sin that a Man doth is without the Body; But he that committeth Fornication ſinneth againſt his own Body.* As much as to ſay, Other Sins pollute the Heart and the Soul; but all Sins of Impurity pollute the Body likewiſe. Other Sins are committed againſt God, or our Neighbour; but theſe againſt one's Self. They foul the Fleſh, and contaminate the Body, which ſhould be kept in Chaſtity and Purity, and, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *ver.* 19. as *a Temple of the Holy-Ghoſt.* And how deplorable the State of ſuch who yet indulge themſelves in it will be, the ſame Apoſtle acquaints us, 1 *Cor.* iii. 17. *If any Man defile the Temple of God, him will God deſtroy.*

The

The Wiſe-Man alſo aſſures us of him that *goeth after a ſtrange Woman*, That he does it to his own Deſtruction : *As an Ox goeth to the Slaughter, as a Fool to the Correction of the Stocks, or as a Bird haſteth to the Snare, and knoweth not that it is for its Life.* Often-times this Vice not only involves in it multitudes of other Evils, but expoſes to Temporal Deſtruction and Death. But the greateſt Infelicity and infinitely the worſt it is or can be liable to, is that Eternal Death which follows upon it in the other World. *Him will God deſtroy* for ever and ever. And this Conſideration therefore I have reſerved for the laſt place.

5. This Vice leads to inevitable Deſtruction of both Body and Soul in Hell. It is the chief of thoſe *Luſts of the Fleſh* which the Scriptures ſo ſeverely condemn, and ſo conſtantly diſſuade from. Under what Character it went in the Old Teſtament, may be collected not only from the *VIIth Commandment*, and ſuch other Prohibitions as thoſe, *Deut.* xxiii. 17. *There ſhall be no Whore of the Daughters of Iſrael, nor a Sodomite of the Sons of Iſrael :* And *Levit.* xviii. 20. *Thou ſhalt not lie carnally with thy Neighbour's Wife, to defile thy ſelf with her* ; but likewiſe from ſuch Denunciations as that, *cap.* xx. 10. *The Man that committeth Adultery with another Man's Wife, even he that committeth Adultery with his Neighbour's Wife, the Adulterer and the Adultereſs ſhall ſurely be put to death :* From ſuch Expreſſions as thoſe of the Wiſe-Man

Man, *Prov.* v. 3, 4, 5. *The Lips of a Strange Woman drop as an Honeycomb, and her Mouth is ſmoother than Oil. But her End is bitter as Wormwood, ſharp as a two-edged Sword. Her Feet go down to Death; her Steps take hold on Hell.* And *chap.* vi. 24, 25, 26. *To keep thee from the Evil Woman, and the Flattery of the Tongue of a Strange Woman. Luſt not after her Beauty in thine Heart; neither let her take thee with her Eyelids. For by means of a whoriſh Woman, a Man is brought to a piece of Bread, and the Adultereſs will hunt for the precious Life.* *Chap.* xxii. 14. *The Mouth of a Strange Woman is a deep Pit; he that is abhorred of the Lord ſhall fall therein.* And again, *chap.* xxiii. 27, 28. *A Whore is a deep Ditch; and a Strange Woman is a narrow Pit. She alſo lieth in wait for a Prey, and encreaſeth the Tranſgreſſors among Men* And *Eccleſ.* vii. 26. *I find more bitter than Death, the Woman whoſe Heart is Snares and Nets, and her Hands as Bands: whoſo pleaſeth God ſhall eſcape from her, but the Sinner ſhall be taken by her.* And again, from ſuch Expoſtulations and Reprehenſions as thoſe of the Prophets; *How ſhall I pardon thee for this? thy Children have forſaken me, and ſworn by them that are no Gods: when I had fed them to the full, then they committed Adultery, and aſſembled by troops in the Harlots Houſes. Shall I not viſit for theſe things? ſaith the Lord; and ſhall not my Soul be avenged on ſuch a Nation as this?* Jer. v. 7, 9. And *chap.* vii. 9, 10. *Will ye Steal, Murder, and commit Adultery,* &c. *And come*

come and ſtand before me in this Houſe, which is called by my Name, and ſay we are delivered to do all theſe Abominations? And *Hoſ.* iv. 1, 2, 3. *Hear the Word of the Lord, ye Children of Iſrael; for the Lord hath a Controverſy with the Inhabitants of the Land, becauſe there is no Truth, nor Mercy, nor Knowledge of God in the Land. By Swearing, and Lying, and Killing, and Stealing, and committing Adultery, they break out, and Blood toucheth Blood. Therefore ſhall the Land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein ſhall languiſh, with the Beaſts of the Field, and the Fowls of Heaven; yea, the Fiſhes of the Sea alſo ſhall be taken away.* Where *Adultery* is manifeſtly one of thoſe crying Sins, for which theſe heavy Judgments were to be brought upon the Land. And from this and the forementiond Texts, together with others of the like nature, it is plain, that the Sin of *Uncleanneſs* was abundantly condemned, and caution'd againſt, amongſt the Jews.

What Notion that faithful Servant of God, *Job*, had of it of old, we learn from himſelf, *Job* xxxi. 1. *I made a Covenant with mine Eyes: Why then ſhould I think upon a Maid?* And a little after, *ver.* 9, 10, 11, 12. *If mine Heart hath been deceived by a Woman, or if I have laid wait at my Neighbour's door; then let my Wife grind unto another, and let others bowe down upon her. For this is an heinous Crime; yea, it is an Iniquity to be puniſhed by the Judges.* Nor was any thing more common in the Old Teſtament, than for the Prophets to exclaim

againſt

againſt Idolatry, as Spiritual Whoredom; which we may be ſure they would never have done, if that Carnal Whoredom, whereto they compared, it had not been look'd upon as a Crime of more than ordinary both Guilt and Danger; a Sin wherewith the Almighty will be highly incens'd, and for which He will not therefore fail to avenge himſelf proportionably upon the obſtinate, impenitent Offenders.

And in the New Teſtament our Bleſſed Saviour reckons *Adultery* and *Fornication* amongſt thoſe Evils, which *proceed from within, and defile a Man*, St. *Matth.* xv. 19, 20. *And know ye not*, ſays his Apoſtle St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* vi. 9, 10. *that the Unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither Fornicators —— nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abuſers of themſelves with Mankind —— ſhall inherit the Kingdom of God.* And again, *Gal.* v. 19. *The Works of the Fleſh are manifeſt, which are theſe, Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Laſciviouſneſs*, &c. *Of which*, ſays the Apoſtle, *ver.* 21. *I tell you before, as I have alſo told you in times paſt, that they which do ſuch things ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* And again he ſpeaks of it as a Truth all were fully ſatisfied of, That the Luſtful and Unclean muſt never hope to reign with God, and our Bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer: *Epheſ.* v. 5. *This ye know, that no Whoremonger nor Unclean Perſon hath any Inheritance in the Kingdom of God and of Chriſt.* And again once more, *Heb.* xiii. 4. *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge:*

judge: He will pass a severe Sentence upon such gross Offenders, and will never admit them to taste of the Heavenly Felicity.

But this is not all. Possibly they might esteem it no great Punishment to be kept out of Heaven, where they can never think to enjoy any of those brutish Satisfactions, which take up their Thoughts, and employ their Minds at present. And therefore they would do well seriously to attend to that other part of their Sentence, which will be * to *depart into Everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* This will be the doleful Fate of all impenitent Sinners, and of these therefore amongst the rest. As will be yet more apparent, if it be remembred that, *Rev.* xxi. 8. the *Abominable*, Ἐβδελυγμένοι, those that allow themselves in the grosser Acts of filthy Uncleanness, and *Whoremongers*, Πόρνοι, which includes both || Adulterers and Fornicators, are recorded amongst those who shall be condemned to the dismal fiery Lake, *the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone.*

* St. Mat. 25. 41.

|| St. Mat. 5. 32. & 19. 19. *compared with* 1 Cor. 6. 10. & Gal. 5. 19.

The Sum is, That this Vice of *Uncleanness* is an egregiously Wicked and Destructive Sin; a Sin that very often is attended with dreadful Consequents in this World, and brings Ruine and Misery to Persons Bodies and Souls, Relations and Posterity; and has several peculiar Aggravations that very much inhance its Guilt, and so make it far the more intolerable in relation to a Future State. It is not only a manifest Breach of our Baptismal Vow, as all other

Wilful

wilful Sin is, but it is what in a particular manner is committed againſt our own Bodies, and beſides is a common Occaſion of bringing others in to partake of the like Wickedneſs. In moſt Inſtances there muſt be a Partner concern'd in it, and many times ſeveral others are prevail'd upon to be ſome way Abettors to it. And ſo it is highly inſtrumental, in order to both the preſent, and future, temporal and eternal Ruine of Mankind.

And now can there poſſibly be imagin'd any ſuch Pleaſure in it, as may countervail all theſe terribly pernicious Effects of it? Are all the Cares and Troubles, and all the Shame and Diſgrace the Luſtful Perſon brings upon himſelf here, the Pains and Diſeaſes he contracts, the needleſs and extravagant Expences he runs himſelf into, the Poverty, the Streights and Wants whereto he is hereby reduced; are all theſe nothing, in compariſon of the Satisfaction he enjoys in his Lewd and Diſſolute manner of Life? Or rather, on the other hand, are they not ſuch unaccountable Inſtances of Folly, as all Wiſe and Conſiderate Men are ſtartled at, and have ſuch an Averſion to, that nothing in the World can prevail with them to order their Lives accordingly? But then, in relation to another Life, the Miſchief is infinitely greater. Nor can the moſt ſenſeleſs Lunatick upon Earth act more inconſiſtently, than they do who abandon themſelves to this Vice; and ſo for the gratification of a preſent unreaſonable brutiſh Appetite, are ſure to be intolerably, unconceivably, infinitely miſerable to all Eternity.

Yet this is the certain State of all who live and die in this Sin. They for the moſt part render themſelves very unhappy and wretched in this World; and in the World to come can hope for nothing better than Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguiſh, Pains and Tortures, and Blackneſs of Darkneſs, with the Devil and his Angels, for evermore.

Wherefore the Reſult of theſe awakening Conſiderations ſhould be, an unfeigned Love and Practice of the Virtue treated of in the latter Part of the following *Diſcourſe*; that all who read them, be invited to hate the Garment ſpotted and defiled of the Fleſh, and to *cleanſe themſelves* (as St. *Paul* exhorts) * *from all Filthineſs both of Fleſh and Spirit, perfecting Holineſs in the Fear of God.* The Apoſtle St. *Peter* tells us, all *Fleſhly Luſts war againſt the Soul*, 1 St. *Pet.* ii. 11. and thereby informs us of the Lovelineſs and Excellency, the Safety and Advantage of Chaſtity, which being diametrically oppoſite to thoſe of Luſt, muſt have a directly contrary tendency, and muſt naturally conduce to the Welfare and Happineſs of all that have attained to it. It prevents the forementioned dreadful Evils, preſerves us from living like Beaſts in this World, and prepares us for the Enjoyment of Eternal Happineſs in the other. And it is therefore well worth all the Care, and Watchfulneſs, and Mortification, and Prayer, and Faſting we can uſe for acquiring it where it is wanting, or preſerving it where it is.

* 2 Cor. 7. 1.

See what a high Eſteem the Patriarch *Joſeph* had of this Virtue, and how reſolved he was, not

not to part with it on any terms! Whom, when a Captive in *Egypt*, neither his wanton Miſtreſs, with all her own Charms, and moſt earneſt Solicitations, nor all the additional Motives that either Hope or Fear might ſuggeſt, could invite to defile himſelf with her. She offered herſelf firſt, without putting him to the trouble of trying her; and this when he was in the Heat and Vigour of Youth, and ſo the leſs likely to reject her Motion. And it was not a common Proſtitute who thus accoſted him, but a Woman of Credit and Reputation, as may be concluded from her Husband's readineſs to believe her groundleſs Accuſation of innocent *Joſeph*, and to lay all the blame upon him. She was much his Superior in Quality, his Miſtreſs, the Wife of *Potiphar*, an Officer of Character and Intereſt in *Pharaoh*'s Court, and a Captain of his Guards. And whether Beautiful or not we cannot know, ſince the Scripture mentions nothing of it; yet conſidering her Condition, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe her ſet off with all the outward Ornaments that Art or Nature could afford for rendring her Amiable and Inviting. It is poſſible alſo ſhe might have tried other Methods of Enticing, as *Reuben* is made, (*a*) in the Teſtament of the Twelve Patriarchs, to ſay ſhe did. But it is much rather to be depended upon, that her Intereſt in her Husband might have been a likely means of advancing *Joſeph* to a higher

(*a*) Καὶ ὁ πολλὰ ἐπείνασε ἡ Αἰγυπτία, καὶ μάγους παρελάβε, καὶ φάρμακα αὐτῷ προσήνεγκε. Grab. Spicileg. Patr. Sect. I. p. 149.

Station, had he condeſcended to comply with her. And no leſs, on the other hand, might it be preſumed that his Denial would prove, as in Fact it did, very much to his Diſadvantage, and, for ought he knew, would terminate in his utter Ruine. Eſpecially conſidering the Diſtance he was at from his Native Country and Relations, being ſold a Slave into *Egypt*, and ſo without that Countenance and Aſſiſtance he might otherwiſe have expected upon any cauſeleſs Accuſation. Beſides, this was not a ſingle Attempt, but often and eagerly repeated, to try if he could any way be wrought upon, to hearken at one time, to what he had rejected at others. And, laſtly, to compleat all her Stratagems, ſhe had at length found out a convenient Opportunity, when they were both alone, and no body in the Houſe to detect them, if he ſhould comply, nor, on the other hand, to diſprove her falſe Accuſations upon his Refuſal. Perhaps, never did more, and more inviting Circumſtances concurr to ſet off a Temptation to the beſt advantage. And yet ſuch an Apprehenſion had the religious Patriarch of this Sin, and he knew it to be ſo diſpleaſing to Almighty God, and ſo dangerous to himſelf, that he remained immoveable as a Rock, under all the Solicitations he met with, reſolutely repelling the Temptreſs with this ſhort but unanſwerable Expoſtulation; *How can I do this great Wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?* Gen. xxxix. 9. And *ver.* 12. as *She caught him by his Garment, ſaying, Lie with me*; rather than yield to her unreaſonable and luſtful Deſire,

he

he left his Garment in her Hand, and fled, and got him out. A noble Example of a Soul that was above the tranſitory Pleaſures and Enjoyments of this preſent World, or whatever might defeat his Hopes and Expectations in the other! And no leſs convincing a Token is it of the clear Senſe and Perſuaſion he had, that this was a grievous and a crying Sin, a Sin of a deep Dye, and whereby he ſhould have been ſure greatly to provoke Almighty God, and to bring down a ſevere Vengeance upon himſelf, if he had not kept upon his Guard againſt it.

What an intolerable Shame is it then for Chriſtians, who have had Life and Immortality brought to light by the Goſpel, have had their Duty, and the indiſpenſable Obligation they are under to live in Purity and Holineſs, fully diſplayed before them, and whom their Saviour has Redeemed with his own moſt Ineſtimable Blood: What an intolerable Shame, I ſay, is it for ſuch not to retain a like invincible Reverence for *Chaſtity?* This is no more than our Lord requires of all his Diſciples, no more than we all make Profeſſion of, no more than we have ſolemnly vow'd and covenanted to perform; and without which we can never hope to be Sav'd.

For God's ſake therefore, and for their own ſakes, both Souls and Bodies, let all who name the Name of CHRIST be mindful to depart from all Iniquity, and in particular from all Impurity. *Without Holineſs, there is no ſeeing God*, Heb. xii. 14. And this none can have any pretence to, who leads an immoral and vicious Life. And all ſuch therefore are very nearly

concerned to bethink themſelves, and to reform whatſoever is amiſs in their Converſation; and if they have indulged themſelves in any ſort of Uncleanneſs, a true Love, either of God or themſelves, would direct them to recover themſelves out of it with all the ſpeed that may be.

It is related of the Philoſopher *Democritus*, (*a*) That he put out his own Eyes, to avoid the Temptations of this Vice. This indeed is not required of Chriſtians, but only to arm ourſelves againſt thoſe Temptations that either by the Sight, or any other way preſent themſelves to our Minds; that ſo whatſoever impure Inclinations ariſe at any time in our Hearts, may be immediately ſtifled, and may not be ſuffered to infect us, and draw us aſide to the Satisfying of them. And if Perſons will not do thus much to Save themſelves, will not deny themſelves, and mortifie the Fleſh, and be continually upon their Watch, conſtantly and indefatigably begging alſo of God to aſſiſt their weak Endeavours, and preſerve them in Chaſtity all their days, they muſt blame themſelves only, if they be unhappy at preſent, and abundantly more ſo hereafter, to all Eternity.

(*a*) Tertul. Apol. c. 46. & Petav. de Rat. Temp. l. 3. c. 8.

The Author's PREFACE.

UNcleanneſs *being a Shameful Sin, and of which it is troubleſome to diſcourſe, I was for a long time unſatisfied, before I could bring myſelf to reſolve upon the Publication of this Work. I obſerv'd it very difficult to treat of a Subject of ſuch a Nature, with all the Exactneſs that is neceſſary. And I doubt not but others beſides me have been with-held from it by the ſame Conſideration, and that this is the principal Reaſon why ſo little has been written againſt this Vice.*

And yet perhaps there is no part of Chriſtian Morality, whereupon there is more need of Writing than this. Uncleanneſs *is one of thoſe Vices that reign moſt generally. It cannot be denied, that there are amongſt Chri-*

ſtians a great Number of Perſons, who abandon themſelves to the greateſt Exceſſes of this Sin, and to whom, what St. Paul *affirmed of the Heathens, may fitly be applied, That* being paſt feeling, they have given themſelves up to all ſorts of Pollution, *Epheſ.* iv. 19. *But howſoever there are very great and very frequent Scandals given this way, there is good reaſon to ſuppoſe that the Number of Offenders is much greater than it appears; inaſmuch as they who commit this Sin, ſtudy all they can to conceal it, and often-times order the Matter ſo as no Man can make the leaſt diſcovery of them. In ſhort, There are Multitudes in the World, who, though free from the Crimes of Impurity, are yet poſſeſſed by the diſorderly Paſſions of the Fleſh, and defile themſelves diverſe Ways, by Actions and Deſires contrary to* Chaſtity. *Whence it appears, that this Sin is very common, and that it is high time to oppoſe it.*

But if a Man enquire, how it comes to paſs, that this Vice reigns ſo in all Places: It muſt be owned, that one of the chief Cauſes of this Evil, is the ſcarcity of Inſtructions

Inſtructions and Aſſiſtance in relation to it. It is certain, that did Perſons rightly underſtand the Heinouſneſs of this Sin, and the Reaſons there are for refraining from it, if they would ſeriouſly call to mind thoſe admirable Precepts of Purity, and the powerful Motives to Chaſtity *which are offered by the Goſpel, if they would make uſe of thoſe ſo effectual Means, which the Goſpel affords for conquering the Deſires of the Fleſh, and living Continently and Holily,* Uncleanneſs *would be much rarer than it is. But Chriſtians are not ordinarily ſufficiently informed of this Matter. In Sermons, it is treated of only in General. And there are few Books relating to it, whereby to ſupply the want of Oral Inſtructions; inſomuch that whilſt there is plenty of wicked Books to promote Impurity, and the Number of them is every day encreaſing, there is hardly any Tract to be met with for reclaiming Perſons from ſo dangerous a Paſſion. This has been my long Obſervation, and has made me conclude, a Diſcourſe againſt* Uncleanneſs *muſt needs be highly uſeful. I have alſo taken ſome Pains this way for divers Years; for the Edification of the*

Church

Church where I ſerve; yet I have never reſolved till now to publiſh my Thoughts upon this Subject.

One thing I muſt beg leave to advertiſe thoſe who ſhall read this Treatiſe, and which I beſeech them to have always before their Eyes; and that is, That the Caſe is by no means the ſame with the Matter I am treating of, and other Points of Morality. For in handling other Topicks, a Man may ſafely ſay whatever he thinks any way advantageous to his Deſign, and has nothing to hinder him from rallying together whatever he apprehends neceſſary, and propoſing his Arguments in their utmoſt extent and force, making them as plain as poſſible, and anſwering all Difficulties relating to them. But in arguing againſt Uncleanneſs, *the ſame Liberty is not to be taken, but a Man is extremely confined, and is obliged to expreſs himſelf with Circumſpection and Caution, for fear of intrenching upon Modeſty. For which Cauſe, I have not been able to preſs my Reaſonings ſo home as were to have been wiſhed, nor to enforce my Proofs with that degree of Evidence they might other-*

otherwiſe have had. Some Points ſhould have been more enlarged upon, and ſome Objections more particularly conſidered; but this would have neceſſitated me to touch upon ſome things which Decency forbids. There are alſo divers things which I am obliged to expreſs only in general Terms, others which I dare but juſt hint, and others again that I am forced totally to ſuppreſs. However, I make it my endeavour to ſupply this Defect, inevitable in a Work of this nature, by the Principles I lay down; and I intreat my Readers alſo to help it on their part by their Attention and Reflections.

And whereas this Book may come into the hands of divers who are guilty of the Sin here condemned, I earneſtly beſeech and conjure ſuch to conſider ſeriouſly what I advance; and that whilſt they are reading it, they will duly reflect upon their own Caſe, and will diſengage themſelves from the Snares of Uncleanneſs *whilſt they may. I beg thoſe alſo who have not incurred this Guilt, and more particularly the Younger ſort of them, may make a good Uſe of what they*

meet

meet with here, and that it may be a Means of ſecuring them againſt a Sin whoſe Conſequences are ſo fatal, and which involves thoſe that indulge themſelves in it in the utmoſt Misfortunes.

THE

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Hieronymus adverſus *Jovinianum*, lib. I.

Periclitamur Reſponſionis verecundiâ ; & quaſi inter duos ſcopulos, & quaſdam neceſſitatis & pudicitiæ Συμπλήγαδες, hinc atque inde vel pudoris vel cauſæ naufragium ſuſtinemus. Si ad propoſita reſpondeamus, pudore ſuffundimur. Si pudor imperârit ſilentium, quaſi de loco videmur cedere, & adverſario feriendi cauſam dare. Melius eſt tamen, clauſis, quod dicitur, oculis, Andabatarum more pugnare, quàm directa ſpicula clypeo non repellere Veritatis.

ERRATA.

PAge xxii. Line 2. read *others*; p. 16. l. 1. r. *The*; p. 18. l. 35. for *will* r. *would*; p. 24. l. 12. r. *Superſcription*; p. 47. l. 37. r. *that*; p. 71. l. 32. r. *Aſcendent*; p. 84. l. 7. r. *of his*; p. 96. l. 25. r. *Effects*; p. 129. l. 7. dele *where*; p. 153. l. 21. for *themſelves* r. *him*; p. 154. l. 2. for *I ſay*, r. *I anſwer*; l. 15. r. *ſpiritual*; p. 177. l. 37. r. *Objects*; p. 189. l. 23. r. *any one*; p. 190. l. 10. after *governs* add (,) a Comma; p. 220. l. 10. r. *that*; p. 249. l. 24 & 25. dele *to*; p. 253. l. ult. r. ἀγωνιζόμενος; p. 261. l. 30. r. *Sickneſſes*; p. 264. l. 13. r. *Aſſiſtance*; p. 270. l. 13. dele *as*.

A DISCOURSE CONCERNING UNCLEANNESS And in behalf of CHASTITY.

PART I.

Of Uncleanness.

SECT. I.

That Uncleanneſs is a Sin.

IT being neceſſary in the beginning of this Treatiſe to ſhew that Uncleanneſs is a Sin, I ſhall therefore apply my ſelf in the firſt place to prove this concerning Uncleanneſs in general, in the ſecond place with reſpect to Adultery, and thirdly with regard to thoſe other

Species of it which may at any time be committed, in Deed, in Word, or in Thought. And becauſe there are two different Ways to diſcover, whether any thing be ſinful; the one, when it is condemn'd by the Light of Nature and Reaſon; the other, when it is forbidden by thoſe Laws which Almighty God has delivered to Mankind in his written Word: I ſhall make it appear from each of theſe, that Uncleanneſs is ſo, and therefore utterly unlawful. And to this end it will be requiſite to enquire firſt, what Nature and Right Reaſon teach as to this Point, and then what is the Doctrine of Scripture concerning it.

CHAP. I.

Conſiderations from Nature.

THough the Proofs that may be alledged from the holy Scriptures are enough to perſwade all ſuch as own the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, and are abundantly more cogent and convincing, than any that can be brought from the Dictates of Nature, it will however be moſt proper to begin with theſe latter, whereby to make it evident that what Revelation teaches concerning Uncleanneſs, has an exact Agreement with Right Reaſon. And here divers Reflections readily preſent themſelves, which to all that ſhall calmly and impartially conſider them, will appear highly juſt, admirably well ſuiting with the Nature of Man, and manifeſtly tending to the Good of Society.

I. This therefore I lay down as a Principle, That Mankind ought to have ſome Rule in their Search

Search after, and Uſage of whatſoever is pleaſing to Fleſh and Senſe, and that we are not always to attend to our own Paſſions, and follow their Motions. For every one muſt neceſſarily acknowledge, either that we ought all to be left entirely to our own Management, or elſe that we muſt have ſome Rules given us for the better Government of our Lives. If it be pretended that we are to be left to our ſelves, this is to degrade us into the Rank of Beaſts, which, for want of Reaſon to direct them better, blindly and impetuouſly purſue their own natural Inſtinct. And this were in truth a meer brutiſh Notion, unworthy of a Rational Creature, and which would go a great way towards aboliſhing all that is wont to be ſtiled either Vice or Virtue. Even the Nature of Man ſhews that he ought to regulate his Deſires, and that all things are not permitted and allowed him. His own Reaſon and Judgment will enable him to diſcover what is for his own Advantage, and to diſtinguiſh what he is to do, and what to refrain from. Beſides that he has it in his Power to keep under his Paſſions, his Conſtitution being ſuch, that they cannot carry him aſide without his own Concurrence, but he finds it in his own Choice, either to follow, or reſiſt them; and that by conſequence he is bound to make a right uſe of his diſcerning Faculties, and the Power that God has given him. Nor can any deliver themſelves up to the Government of their Paſſions, without infinite Miſchief to themſelves, and occaſioning all ſorts of Diſorder in the World, and producing much greater Confuſion amongſt Men than is to be ſeen in the very Brutes, which being determined by a ſecret Inſtinct, are hereby contained within their certain Bounds, and never arrive at the Exceſſes of thoſe Perſons, who inordinately abuſe their Reaſon and Phancy, to ſearch

and find out means of ſatisfying their unreaſonable Paſſions, and are continually under the ſole Conduct of their own extravagant Humour. But this is more eſpecially to be feared, in reſpect to the Luſt of Uncleanneſs, as being a Paſſion that is too often obſerved, to hurry People on to the fouleſt Extravagances. Whence it clearly follows, that we are not left entirely to our own Liberty, but that Care muſt be taken to govern and regulate our Deſires, and keep them within their proper Limits.

And if you would know what are the proper Limits and Rules to be obſerved in this Caſe, do but ſeriouſly conſider a while with your ſelves, and you will preſently be convinced, that there is no more effectual Remedy to be preſcribed than Marriage. No other ſure Direction can be given beſides this, nor any ſo proper means of ordering things aright, and preventing the terrible Effects of Incontinence. Take away this one Barriet, and let Allowance be given to Impurity, and immediately there will be an end of all Rule and Order. Nothing would be able to put a ſtop to the Licentiouſneſs and Extravagances that would hereby break in upon us, but all other Bounds that might be fixed would forthwith be broken down. Wherefore the true and only Means of regulating Mankind, and maintaining an innocent Converſation amongſt them, is to reſtrain them by Marriage, and leave them ſubject in other reſpects to the Laws of Chaſtity: As will farther appear by what follows.

II. My ſecond Argument ſhall be taken from the Advantages and Excellence of Marriage. On which whenſoever we ſeriouſly and attentively fix our Meditations, we cannot ſufficiently admire the Wiſdom of our great Creator, in the Proviſion he has thus made for the Preſervation of Man-

Mankind. And accordingly it might adminiſter occaſion for divers Reflections, That Almighty God, who could have peopled the World, by only commanding Men to be, as he did our firſt Parent *Adam*, would chooſe rather to have them propagated by the ordinary way of Generation; and to that end created them at the beginning both Male and Female, and ordained a ſtrict Union between them. But it not being to my purpoſe to enter at preſent upon theſe ſeveral Conſiderations, I ſhall content my ſelf only to obſerve, That this was a ſenſible Demonſtration, that the Almighty would take this Method, to lay a ſure Foundation of Society, and the Happineſs of Mankind. It is plain he deſign'd hereby to eſtabliſh a moſt intimate Union of Parents betwixt themſelves, and with their Children; and that the Ordinance of Marriage is the beſt way to promote the Happineſs of Families, and by conſequence of larger Societies. This State was requiſite for the Good of Mankind, for their mutual Comfort and Satisfaction, for the Education of Children, and for the Preſervation of Order and Quiet in the World. Moreover the Laws of Marriage, at leaſt very often, prevent their having Children as long as they live, and in too great Numbers, each of which would be a great Obſtruction to their good Education. Neither, were it not for this, would People be ſo concern'd, as they now ordinarily ſhew themſelves to be, for the Good of the Publick and for Poſterity. It ought alſo to be conſider'd, That ſeeing Men are endued with Reaſon, and have a Senſe of Virtue, it is therefore of great Importance to them to chooſe ſuch a State of Life as may repreſs the Violence of a moſt dangerous Paſſion, and which has moſt miſchievous Conſequences attending it; which State can be no other than that

of Matrimony. All theſe Conſiderations, together with ſeveral other that might be added to them, make it very clear, that Marriage is an Inſtitution moſt beneficial to Mankind, and every way worthy of the immenſe Goodneſs, and infinite Wiſdom of God. And that it is an Ordinance every way ſuitable to the Nature of Man, and of abſolute Neceſſity, appears from this, That it has been every where received, and its Neceſſity has been ſo much the more freely own'd, and its Laws ſo much the more carefully obey'd, by how much the better inſtructed, and the more civilized any People have been.

But now Uncleanneſs has a neceſſary Tendency to ſubvert this ſo happy Inſtitution, and ſo ſingularly advantageous to Mankind. Inſomuch that if this Vice were once look'd upon as an indifferent matter, many Perſons would not marry at all, becauſe of ſome Troubles and Inconveniences that are incident to the Married State; and even the greateſt Part of thoſe that ſhould marry, would neither be able to live in Unity, Satisfaction, and Peace, nor would love their Children, nor take that Care of them, which is incumbent upon all Parents. So that whereſoever Luſt prevails to the Contempt of Marriage, (which, as I have already obſerved, is a moſt neceſſary Ordinance, in order to the Welfare of Mankind, and is the Foundation of all Societies) ſeeing it hereby diſſolves the Bonds and Relations, that are wont to unite Perſons moſt firmly to each other, it is manifeſtly wicked and unlawful, and would be a means of introducing all ſorts of Crimes, and Miſchiefs into the World. In ſhort, as there is no Harm in keeping to the Laws of Marriage, and obſerving them exactly, this being only to live conformably to Reaſon and Virtue; ſo, on the other hand, the Evils ariſing from

from the Abolition of theſe Laws, and the Allowance of inordinate Luſts would be unavoidable and endleſs.

III. Uncleanneſs is contrary to the moſt inviolable Laws of Juſtice, and that Order which muſt be preſerved in Society. For if there be any one Principle of natural Juſtice that is certain and indiſputable, it is this, That every one ſhould be allowed a Subſiſtence; and eſpecially that Children are to be provided for and brought up. To doubt of this is to ſhew our ſelves unnatural and worſe than Beaſts. Children we all know are born in a very feeble Condition, and have for a long time ſuch need of Support, that were they left to themſelves, they muſt all be loſt. And hence it is moſt highly neceſſary, that there ſhould be ſome others to take care of them. But of whom can this be required? Nature it ſelf teaches that there are none under ſuch Obligation to it, as thoſe who brought them into the World. The Milk wherewith Mothers are naturally furniſhed, teſtifies them to be in an eſpecial manner determin'd by the Law of the Creator, to ſuckle their little ones. Nor are the Fathers leſs concerned to take care of them. Neither can the Mothers make due Proviſion for their Maintenance and Education, without the Father's Aſſiſtance.

But then to the end that both Fathers and Mothers may apply themſelves to nouriſh and bring up their Children, it is requiſite they ſhould know them, and that their Birth ſhould be ſuch as they may ſecurely depend upon; beſides the divers weighty Reaſons there are, why this ſhould likewiſe be known in the Society whereinto they are born. Parents ought too after this to have a natural Tenderneſs and Affection to their Children, whereby to incline them to the greater care of them. This Love is a principal, and original

Cauſe, not only of all the Good that Fathers do to their Children, but alſo of innumerable other matters, moſt beneficial to Society, in which Men now engage, but which they would never engage in, if a paternal Kindneſs did not put them upon it. Again, it is moſt proper for Fathers and Mothers to live together, that they may jointly take care of their Children, and may have them near at hand upon all occaſions. Moreover they ſhould have Time and Means for nouriſhing and breeding them up; upon which account it would be very inconvenient to have them in too great number. All this is perfectly agreeable to Reaſon and Juſtice; but withal I muſt add, That all this can never be effected any other way than by Marriage.

The Permiſſion of Uncleanneſs would ſubvert theſe natural, and neceſſary Laws. Fathers would frequently not know their own Offspring; and would have no means of being aſſured that any of them were really their own. And both Fathers and Mothers would be at a loſs as to the Method of bringing them up; partly for want of being Members of the ſame Family, and ſo not living together with them; partly becauſe there would be too many for them; and again for other Reaſons eaſily diſcernible. Uncleanneſs has a conſiderable Influence upon Paternal Affection, and if it doth not wholly extinguiſh it, it however greatly weakens it; and tempts both Parents, but more eſpecially the Fathers, to abandon their Children, and ſo as much as in them lies to become their Murderers. And ſo the Conſequence would be, that their Children being neglected and ill educated, would not only become unhappy during their whole Lives, but would cauſe a thouſand Diſorders to the Publick. If any one deſire to be ſatisfied, that theſe would

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be the natural Effects of Uncleanneſs, he need only recollect how it far'd among the Heathens, with whom this Vice was ſo cuſtomary. In ſome places their Infants were expoſed, as ſoon as born, and vaſt Numbers of them periſhed. In ſome places Parents looked upon themſelves as having a Right of putting them to death. And others ſold them; which was one Cauſe of the prodigious Multitudes of Slaves, that were in thoſe times. All theſe horrible Enormities, which Chriſtian Religion has extirpated out of the World, would immediately return, if Impurity were again taken for an indifferent matter.

I know not what can be replied to theſe Aſſertions, unleſs it be, That in truth theſe Diſorders would be found, if Men entirely abandoned themſelves to Senſuality; but that no ſuch Miſchiefs are to be feared, ſo long as they contain themſelves within certain Rules. But here I demand again; What Rules and Bounds ſhould they have ſet them? And how could theſe foremention'd Inconveniences be prevented, otherwiſe than by the Help of Marriage? Poſſibly it may be ſaid, Children might be nouriſhed and brought up, though not born in Marriage, provided thoſe, who brought them into the World, would agree together to take care of them. Whereto I anſwer firſt, Howſoever ſome might do this, it will be impoſſible to expect that all ſhould; as is eaſy to infer from what has been already ſaid. I ſay further, That theſe People could never be ſo well aſſured of the Condition and Birth of their Children; nor would find themſelves under ſuch powerful Obligations to love them, as in Marriage. And yet once more; Either it is pretended that thoſe Fathers and Mothers, who ſhould have enter'd into Compact, to take care of their Children, might be again diſcharged of their Obligation,

tion, to the intent they might place their Care upon others, or it is not pretended. If it be admitted that they ought to be diſcharged, this were to open a Paſſage for all thoſe ſame Miſchiefs, which I have been juſt now mentioning, to break in upon us. If it be ſaid, they may not be releaſed, and that they muſt remain faithful to each other, I affirm that they have hereby in a manner ſubjected themſelves to the Laws of Marriage. And ſo thoſe who have recourſe to this kind of Evaſion, confirm, inſtead of confuting, the Truth I have been maintaining, returning to the Inſtitution of Matrimony before they are aware of it; and without conſidering where they are, they acknowledge the Reaſonableneſs and Neceſſity of it.

IV. If it be a true and natural Principle, that Parents are to love their Children, and take care of them, is is no whit leſs reaſonable for Children to love and honour thoſe from whom they have received their Life, to obey them, to comfort them, and to aſſiſt them in time of Age, of Sickneſs, or of Want. Theſe have always been eſteem'd ſacred and inviolable Duties. But as little as People think of it, it is very apparent, that if Uncleanneſs were allow'd of, Children would not know how to anſwer their Obligation in theſe Points. An infinite Number of them would not ſo much as know their own Fathers, not to ſay that they would not dwell in the ſame Neighbourhood with them. They would not be ſenſible of the ſame Motives to love and aſſiſt them. Nor would they at all take themſelves to be under the ſame Obligations with thoſe, who being born in Marriage, paſs generally the better part of their Lives together with their Fathers and Mothers, and are indebted to them for the chief part of whatſoever Advantages they

they enjoy, and have frequent occaſion of making Returns to them upon account of what they are thus indebted for.

V. Another Conſideration which ſhews how Men are naturally obliged to keep to the Laws of Marriage, and to abſtain from all Uncleanneſs, is the Proportion that is ordinarily obſervable between the two Sexes. Which being a powerful Argument againſt Polygamy, and all kind of Uncleanneſs, it therefore deſerves to be the more particularly attended to. The Holy Scripture informs us that God created at the firſt one Man and one Woman. And daily Experience ſhews that the ſame Method is ſtill continued amongſt all that are born into the World. It is not one of the leaſt ſurprizing Inſtances of Providence, that ſuch an Equality is preſerved in relation to the two Sexes, that their Number is yet alike, and there are to this Day as many Men as Women. The Fact is certain; Enquiry has been made, and it has been found that there is very little difference betwixt the Births of both Sexes; and that if at any time there have been born a few more Men than Women, or a few more Women than Men, the Diſparity has proved ſo ſmall as not to be worth ſpeaking of. And he muſt put out his Eyes, who will not ſee that this Proportion and Equality is the Effect of an admirable Wiſdom, and could not have been ſo ordered but by a particular Providence. And hence it clearly follows, That the Author of Nature has determined to provide for the Preſervation of Mankind by the help of Marriage; and that Marriage is to be, not of one Husband with many Wives, nor of one Woman with many Husbands, but of One and One. And ſo it is eaſily to be obſerved, That Uncleanneſs is inconſiſtent with this Order of Nature, and that Proportion there is between the

the two Sexes, and that the only allowable Courſe in this Caſe is Marriage. Nor is there any departing from this Rule, ſo plainly marked out by Nature, without introducing a thouſand dreadful Extravagances, and Mens falling into Adultery, and other more abominable Crimes not fit to be named: As is to be ſeen whereſoever Polygamy, and other Inſtances of Uncleanneſs prevail.

There is no room for pleading upon this Occaſion, That a great many Men are taken off by War; becauſe our preſent Buſineſs is to obſerve things as they are in their own Natural State. Our Bleſſed Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt* has taught us, in the nineteenth Chapter of St. *Matthew*, that without regarding the Irregularities which the Corruptions of Men may have introduced in relation to Marriage, recourſe muſt be had to the firſt beginning of things, and the Creator's Original Inſtitution muſt be kept to: Which I am ſure is a Doctrine no Chriſtian can poſſibly diſpute; and which beſides is exactly agreeable to Reaſon. God did not make Men to deſtroy one another. Nor can it ever be proved that Men may make new Laws to themſelves, may change that Order which God had eſtabliſhed at the beginning, and may wander from thoſe Rules which even Nature has appointed, under pretence, that through the Wickedneſs of Men, at ſome certain times, and in ſome certain places Wars have ariſen, and other Diſturbances, contrary to the Order of Nature. Many other Conſiderations might farther be added upon this Subject, were it neceſſary; but what has been already ſaid is enough to ſatisfy any reaſonable Man.

VI. It is a good Proof of any Duty's being conſonant to the Law of Nature, if it can be ſhewn that Mankind have in all Ages given their Judgment in favour of it. But now if it be asked,

asked, What Sentiments the World has ever had concerning this Sin of Uncleanneſs, theſe two Particulars can no way be denied.

Firſt, That even amongſt the Pagans this Vice could not paſs without a Note of Infamy and Diſgrace. It is ordinarily taken for granted, that they looked upon Fornication as of an indifferent nature, and that it was accordingly allow'd amongſt them. But this cannot be affirmed of all without diſtinction, as if there were none of them who had not this Notion of it. There is no doubt to be made but many of them were of this Opinion, as appears from the Writings of ſeveral of their own Authors. And who knows not that their Practice was accordingly, and that theſe Idolatrous People were extreamly laſcivious, and addicted to the gratifying their Luſts? And it is no great matter of Surprize that they were ſo, conſidering the ſtate of Ignorance and Corruption in which they lived, upon all other accounts. Yet it is not true that Uncleanneſs was generally reputed indifferent amongſt them; it being very unjuſt to fix the Opinions of ſome licentious Poets upon them, as the common Sentiment of them all. There is no Difficulty at all in proving from the Teſtimony of their own Writers, that not only Adultery, but ſimple Fornication too, went under the Character of a wicked Practice, and no way reconcileable to Honour and Virtue. This is evident from the Sayings of divers of their wiſer Authors, from the Laws that from time to time were made amongſt them in favour of Marriage, from what ſome of them have written of Modeſty and Decency of Behaviour, from the Praiſes they gave to theſe Virtues, from divers very remarkable Examples of Chaſtity and Continence which occur in their Hiſtories, from the ill Opinion they ſhew'd themſelves to have of the Incontinent,

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from the Care ſuch took to conceal their Miſcarriages of this nature, and from ſeveral other Conſiderations. They accounted it a great Mark of Reproach for unmarried Perſons to be thus familiar with each other. So that I cannot ſee how it can be ſaid that the Generality of the Heathens imagin'd Fornication to be naturally ſo very indifferent, as many have ſuppoſed concerning them. Almighty God, who wou'd not ſuffer the Principles of Religion and Virtue to be utterly extinguiſhed amongſt theſe poor ignorant People, preſerved ſome Notion of Chaſtity in them, as well as of divers other Duties.

The *Second* thing which I deſire to be conſider'd in behalf of what I have aſſerted, is, the Senſe of Shame and Modeſty that ſo naturally appears in all who are not become more like Brutes than Men, and the Reſervedneſs whereto it invites them. I grant Education has a great Influence upon Perſons, and makes them more or leſs circumſpect as to the manner of their Converſation, and ſome have attained to ſuch a Meaſure of Aſſurance, that Baſhfulneſs and Modeſty make very faint Impreſſions upon them, and indeed are almoſt entirely baniſhed from amongſt them. But then, there are poſſibly no Men in the World, who have not ſome ſmall Remainders of Shame and Modeſty left in them. Yet granting any ſuch can be found, it will by no means follow from hence that Modeſty and Chaſtity are only an empty Name, and that no regard is to be had to them. There are ſome People and Countries, where Robbery paſſes with Impunity, where Fathers expoſe, abandon, and ſell their Children, where Man's Fleſh is fed upon, and where no notice is taken of thoſe ſeveral Laws of Juſtice, which other Nations eſteem inviolable, and whereon depends the Happineſs and Peace of all Civil Society.

ciety. Is this a Reaſon therefore to conclude that theſe Laws are ſurely arbitrary, and not rather of perpetual Obligation? It is no leſs than the utmoſt height of Folly, to judge of the nature of things, and particularly to conclude what is Juſt and Unjuſt, by the Notions of the moſt brutiſh of all Mankind; and ſo pretend to govern the World by the Sentiments of the leſſer Part, and who make the vileſt Figure in it, and have in a manner diveſted themſelves of their Reaſon and Humanity. And common Prudence therefore would direct on the contrary, in this as well as all other Caſes, to prefer the general Conſent of ſuch as ſtrictly follow the Dictates of their Reaſon. Now it is always to be obſerved, that the more cultivated any People are, and the more improved in their Underſtanding, they feel themſelves under the more indiſſoluble Obligation, from the Laws of Decency and an inoffenſive Converſation.

And no wonder therefore that we ſee the Apoſtles of our Lord in their Writings combating Uncleanneſs with this ſame Argument taken from the known Neceſſity of a modeſt and reſerv'd Deportment. St. *Paul* affirms, *Epheſ.* 5. 12. that *It is a ſhame to ſpeak of thoſe things which the Heathens did in ſecret.* And *Chap.* 4. 19. that *Being paſt feeling*, hardened in their Wickedneſs, and ſo not ſenſible of the Evil of their doings, *they had given themſelves over unto Laſciviouſneſs, to work all Uncleanneſs with Greedineſs.* This *Feeling* therefore or Senſe, which the Apoſtle here ſpeaks of, can be none other, than the Senſe of Modeſty and Shame, which many among the Gentiles had almoſt totally loſt.

I conclude then from the Reaſons hitherto propoſed, That if we conſult only the Light of Nature and Right Reaſon, this alone will ſupply us with conſiderable Arguments againſt Uncleanneſs,

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the Evil of which Vice I proceed next to ſhew from the Holy Scriptures. And I ſhall begin with thoſe Proofs of it which we meet with in the Old Teſtament; and afterwards ſhall deſcend to thoſe which we cannot but obſerve in the New.

CHAP. II.

Proofs taken from the Old Teſtament.

1. THE firſt Proof that the Books of the Old Teſtament afford to our purpoſe, is the Inſtitution of Marriage. And though I have already obſerved it, I muſt in this place again take notice that the ſacred Writings teach this Eſtate to have been eſtabliſhed by God †, at the firſt beginning of the World. And being thus of Divine Inſtitution, it ought to be accounted ſo much the more inviolable and ſacred. And that it was inſtituted immediately upon the Creation, is a very good Evidence that the Almighty did not deſign Mankind to be preſerved, and the World to be peopled any other way than by Marriage. In ſaying that *the Man ſhould cleave to his Wife, and they two ſhould be one Fleſh*, he lets us ſee it was by no means his Intention that Perſons ſhould go aſtray from this Law, and abandon themſelves to Senſuality and Incontinence. No, his Deſign was to confine them to a certain Order, and certain Rules. It is alſo to be remember'd that Marriage was inſtituted before the Fall; and if it were needful in the ſtate of Innocency, it is much more ſo now that Man's corrupt and ſinful Nature is ſo ſadly prone to Senſuality and all kind of Wickedneſs; and whoſe Condition now more eſpe-

† Gen. 2. 24.

eſpecially calls for Reſtraint and Government. I add, that God has enacted divers particular Statutes, for rendring this firſt Inſtitution yet more inviolable; Marriage being one of thoſe things, about which God gave the *Jews* the greateſt number of Injunctions. And by conſequence whatſoever is contrary to the Inſtitution of Matrimony, is unlawful.

It may perhaps be objected that Polygamy and Divorce were common among the *Jews*, which ſhews they were not ſtrictly tied to the Laws of Marriage, as is pretended. But to this our Bleſſed Saviour returns anſwer, † That theſe Irregularities were tolerated amongſt that People, not becauſe Almighty God approved of them, but only by reaſon of *the Hardneſs of their Hearts*. As to Divorce he declares, that as it was uſed amongſt them, it was contrary to God's firſt Inſtitution, and *at the beginning it was not ſo*, and neither ſhould it be for the future, but things ſhould be reſtored amongſt his Diſciples, in their own Original Eſtate, wherein they ought to be, and as God had of old appointed them at the time of the Creation. Thus you ſee that Jeſus Chriſt has not given new Laws concerning Marriage, but thoſe which the Goſpel impoſes are preciſely the ſame with thoſe that had been before ordained from the beginning of the World.

† St. Mat. 19. 8, 9.

2. But this is not all: For there are divers Paſſages in the Books of *Moſes*, where Uncleanneſs is plainly condemned. God commands, *Deut.* 23. 17. that there be *no Whore of the Houſe of Iſrael, nor a Whoremonger of the Sons of Iſrael.* It is true the chief Deſign of this Law was to prevent their having any Proſtitutes among them, as there had been amongſt the Idolatrous Nations. Nevertheleſs it may fairly be concluded from hence, that Uncleanneſs in general is forbidden, and that

Fornication is undoubtedly a Sin; becauſe if this were allowed of, it will be hard to give a good Reaſon, why Proſtitution ſhould be a Crime. It is certain likewiſe that God gave this Law becauſe of the Danger the *Iſraelites* were in of being tempted to commit Idolatry, by means of Uncleanneſs, leſt they ſhould follow the Example of the Idolatrous Nations, with whom Proſtitution was wont to accompany the Service of their Idols. But this was not the only Reaſon of the Law. And that God condemned Impurity not only when joined with Proſtitution and Idolatry, but becauſe it is evil in its Nature, appears, beſides what has been already ſaid to prove it, becauſe he forbids it, out of the Caſe of Proſtitution, and where there is no Danger of Idolatry. As will be ſhewn more fully in the Sequel of this Diſcourſe.

3. Levit. 21. 9. *The Daughter of any Prieſt, if ſhe profane her ſelf by playing the whore, ſhe profaneth her Father, ſhe ſhall be burnt with fire.* This Law particularly relates to the Prieſt's Daughters, in as much as other Women were not obnoxious to the ſame Penalty. And there are theſe two Reaſons why it does ſo. The one, becauſe God requires a ſingular Degree of Purity in the Miniſters of Religion, and that whatſoever relates to them ſhould be holy. The other, becauſe God would ſecure the Family of the Prieſts, and the Places of Divine Service, from any ſuch Abominations as were too uſual in the Idol-Temples, and in the Families of the Idolatrous Prieſts. But ſtill this Law ſuppoſes that Fornication is a Sin. For not to inſiſt upon it, that it is not conceivable that God will have threatned the Penalty of Death for what had no where been forbidden, and which was of an indifferent nature, the Terms of the Law, and the Reaſon God aſſigns of it, deſerve

to

to be ſeriouſly attended to. God commands the Prieſt's Daughter that ſhall be convict of Uncleanneſs, in whatſoever manner ſhe ſhall have committed it, and though ſhe have never been chargeable with either Proſtitution, or Idolatry, to be put to death. And the Reaſon he gives of this Law is, becauſe *this Daughter is both defiled her ſelf, and has diſhonoured her Father*; which implies that Fornication is both a Defilement, a thing unſeemly and wicked in its ſelf, and by Conſequence that this is not one of thoſe poſitive Laws, which are founded only on the good Pleaſure of God.

4. Which Doctrine is farther confirm'd by God's not only condemning Incontinence in the Prieſts Daughters, but in all other Women too. He decrees, *Deut.* 22. 19. That if a Man accuſed a Woman whom he had eſpouſed, of having misbehaved her ſelf before her Marriage, he ſhould be obliged in caſe he did it wrongfully, to pay a Sum of Money to her Father. And pray obſerve the Reaſon of this Appointment, *Becauſe he has brought an evil Report upon a Virgin of Iſrael*, as much as to ſay, he has diſgrac'd her by charging her with ſo infamous a Fault. Where it is manifeſtly ſuppoſed, that Uncleanneſs, without Proſtitution and Idolatry, is a matter of Infamy and Guilt. But if the Husband could make good his Charge againſt her, the Woman was forthwith ſtoned at her own Father's Door. No doubt God Almighty order'd this Puniſhment to be inflicted, becauſe of the Injury hereby done to the Husband. But then it is to be noted, That had ſhe in reality done no Evil, and her ſimple Fornication were no Sin, the Husband would have had no juſt Cauſe of Complaint againſt her, becauſe ſhe had then done nothing but what ſhe lawfully might do. And if this were the Caſe, it is not to

be conceived, that God would have ſubjected her to ſo ſevere a Puniſhment. And it cannot therefore be queſtioned but the Women againſt whom this Law was made, were guilty of Sin. The Terms of the Law are very expreſs, *v.* 20. *She ſhall be ſtoned becauſe ſhe hath wrought Folly in Iſrael, to play the whore in her Father's houſe*; and ſo are an undeniable Condemnation of ſimple Fornication. For here is not a word of Uncleanneſs as accompanied with Proſtitution or Idolatry, or as it is committed by a Perſon already betrothed, but only of a Woman not yet betrothed, and in her Father's Houſe, who has fallen into Sin there, and poſſibly but into one Act of it. The Sin thus committed, you ſee, is called Fornication, and Folly, and is ſaid to be ſhameful, and not fit to be ſeen in *Iſrael*. Which ſhews that this Law and all others which God has enacted againſt Incontinence, ſuppoſe the Baſeneſs and Sinfulneſs of it. It is clear that God would have all who are unmarried to live chaſtly, and that all who did otherwiſe acted contrary to that Virtue and Holineſs, which he had required of the People of *Iſrael*. And yet there is one Circumſtance more to be obſerved, That Offenders againſt this Law were to be *ſtoned at their Father's Door*. Which being ſome ſort of Puniſhment to their Fathers, would lay an Obligation upon them to attend the more carefully to the Conduct of their Children: Which is one of thoſe Arguments I might have taken occaſion to enlarge upon, but that my preſent Deſign will not admit of it.

5. In the ſame Chapter, *v.* 28, 29. God commands that whoſoever ſhould have abuſed *a Damſel that was a Virgin*, ſhould pay a Sum of Money to her Father, and ſhould be made to marry her, *whom he had humbled*, defiled; and diſgraced. Which could not be, unleſs Impurity were diſgraceful

graceful and opprobrious. And here it is eſpecially to be noted, That that Man ſhould never be at liberty to put away the Woman whom he had thus diſgraced.

6. There are ſeveral particular Laws in the Books of *Moſes* relating to Uncleanneſs, and which were intended to keep the *Jews* at a diſtance, not only from this Sin, but from all Approaches to it; and ſo to diſpoſe them to Purity and Chaſtity. By which Laws we are taught that it is not only the groſſer Act that defiles, but there are divers Tendencies to it that in ſome degree produce the ſame effect. *Moſes* ſpeaks of divers Species of Pollution, all which the *Jews* were commanded to beware of, and for which ſeveral ſorts of Purifications were preſcribed. But ſeeing theſe Laws are ſuch as I cannot well recite in this place, and cannot therefore make my Obſervations upon, I only point at them in two Words, though I might draw very forcible Arguments from them to prove that God's Deſign in them was to oblige the *Jews* to live in Purity.

7. Laſtly, It is paſt doubt that the Sin we are now treating of always paſſed amongſt the *Jews* for unlawful; as might be evinced from many hiſtorical Occurrences in the Old Teſtament, too long to be here recited, but which fully prove that they conſtantly affixed a Note of Infamy upon it. This appears alſo by the Writings of *Joſephus* and *Philo*, both which ſpeak ſo honourably of *Moſes*'s Law, and particularly with regard to Chaſtity and Continence. I might alſo alledge to this purpoſe divers Paſſages of the *Rabbi's*, and divers Laws and Cuſtoms of that Nation, obliging the younger ſort to Chaſtity, and particularly directing the young Women to be retired, and live in great Purity. But this would be too tedious a Task. And I think it enough to have alledged

the Principal of thoſe Proofs which the Old Teſtament furniſhes us with upon this Subject.

If now we paſs on to the New Teſtament, this will give yet more Light to the Cauſe in hand. Both the Goſpels and the Epiſtles contain ſuch clear Inſtructions, and ſo many and ſuch expreſs Laws againſt Uncleanneſs, that it is impoſſible for ſuch who believe theſe ſacred Writings, and read them with any manner of Attention, to retain the leaſt Doubt of it. I ſhall firſt mention ſome general Conſiderations, before I proceed to thoſe others which are more particular.

CHAP. III.

Some General Obſervations from the New Teſtament.

I Shall firſt propoſe ſome General Conſiderations ariſing from the Chriſtian Doctrine and Religion, to let you ſee with what ſingular Care and Diligence all ought to watch againſt this Sin.

1. Now it is certain the Goſpel does not leſs inſiſt upon this Point than the Law; and ſeeing Chriſtians have received a far greater meaſure of Light and Grace than the *Jews*, they are to be ſo much the more cautious of all Defilement of this nature. Wherefore having already ſeen that the Law of *Moſes* formally condemns all Uncleanneſs, and as well in Single as Married Perſons, and enjoyns Chaſtity to all ſorts of People, there is no pretending that the contrary Liberty is not prohibited to all Chriſtians. It is much leſs excuſable in us; For notwithſtanding God required an unfeigned

feigned Holineſs of the *Jews*, and permitted them no Luſts of the Fleſh, there were ſome Irregularities however tolerated amongſt them. But *Jeſus Chriſt* † has declared, as has already been noted, that it ſhould not be ſo in the Chriſtian Church, and that his Diſciples ſhould hold themſelves obliged, inviolably to obſerve the ſtricteſt Laws of Chaſtity, and more particularly thoſe which had been enacted in reſpect to Marriage, immediately upon the Creation of the World. And here the Reader may pleaſe to obſerve after what manner our Bleſſed Lord explains that Commandment, *Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery*, St. *Matth.* 5. 27, 28. and how much farther he carries the Doctrine of Chaſtity than had been uſual with the Jewiſh Doctors. Whereby he plainly gives us to underſtand, that his Purpoſe was to oblige his Followers to a ſingular degree of Chaſtity, and that if the contrary Practices were forbidden under the Jewiſh Law, they are now much more ſo under the Goſpel. † S. Matt. 19. 8, 9.

2. This firſt Conſideration will appear of the more force, if we take notice in the next place, that the Goſpel condemns whatever tends to promote Senſuality and the Gratification of the Fleſh, and ties the Heart too cloſe to the World and its Enjoyments. This is the true Spirit of the Goſpel, and the principal Aim of the Chriſtian Religion. The great and prime Leſſon of our Saviour is † *to deny our ſelves and* * *all worldly Luſts.* And as ever any would advance in Piety and the Love of God, they muſt be ſure to mortify their Carnal Inclinations, to keep under their Bodies, and get the Maſtery over their unreaſonable and unruly Paſſions. It is St. *John*'s Aſſertion, that † *If any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him.* And among thoſe things which incline the Heart to the World, and obſtruct the Love of God, this † S. Matt. 16. 24. *Tit. 2. 12. † 1 Ep. 2. 15.

* *v.* 16. Apoſtle names in the firſt place * *the Luſt of the Fleſh*; becauſe this Paſſion is moſt common, and moſt violent, and Men are wont to be fondeſt of Corporal Pleaſures. The Motions of this Paſſion are ſo powerful in thoſe who have not duly labour'd to ſubdue it, its Enticements are ſo bewitching, its Returns ſo frequent, that thoſe who indulge it quickly become its Slaves, and it baniſhes the Love of God from their Hearts, together with the Deſire of Spiritual and Heavenly things. This is the Reaſon that they who are addicted to ſenſual Pleaſures, are not in a condition to taſte of thoſe Spiritual Joys which Religion and Piety ſet before them; or to delight themſelves with the Love of God, and Communion with him. For this Cauſe the Goſpel ſo effectually recommends Temperance, and requires to be modeſt in the Deſire and Uſe of lawful things, and enjoins Abſtinence, Faſting, and Mortification. Which is much more than ſimply forbidding the Sins of Impurity. All theſe Doctrines aim at rendring us Chaſt and Pure, to prevent our giving up our ſelves to the Love of the Creatures, and becoming Slaves to Pleaſure. And they are of abſolute neceſſity, to keep us from being ſeduced by the Fleſh, and to beget the Love of God in us, and put us upon ſeeking after the Joys of Heaven. This is the Foundation, and the Epitomy of all Chriſtian Morality. And he that has throughly learned theſe Principles, will eaſily perceive, that if there be any Duty neceſſary in Religion, it is Chaſtity; and if there be any Paſſion againſt which Chriſtians are diligently to guard themſelves, it is Uncleanneſs.

3. And this brings me to a Third General Conſideration, and which is unconteſtable. It is that the Purity to which Chriſtians are called by the Goſpel is ſo extenſive, as to reach even to their Words,

Words, to their Looks, and to their Thoughts. They are to *flee all Appearance of Evil*, and whatſoever may expoſe them to it; are to repreſs the firſt Motions of Luſt, and to mortify their own Inclinations even in relation to things in their own Nature Allowable and Indifferent. All theſe Duties are undoubtedly eſtabliſhed, by the Declarations of our Lord and his Apoſtles. And can any now in the leaſt queſtion what Character Uncleanneſs deſerves? Is it poſſible that Fornication can be thought no Sin in a Chriſtian, when an obſcene Word is ſo, when a bare Caſt of the Eye attended with a luſtful Deſire is by no means to be excuſed, when it is a Sin to cheriſh and encourage impure Thoughts in the Mind, when there may be Sin in the Uſe of Lawful things? Had People rightly underſtood theſe Maxims, had they well conſidered the Spirit of the Goſpel, and the Genius of the Chriſtian Religion, there would have been no need to inſiſt upon theſe Truths, or to be put to the trouble of proving Uncleanneſs to be a Sin. But the Generality live in a ſhameful and ſtupid Ignorance in this reſpect; and have no tolerable Notion of Holineſs and Chriſtian Perfection. And ſo there is no reaſon to be ſurpriſed at their having ſuch looſe Sentiments concerning Uncleanneſs.

4. When the Goſpel enjoins Chaſtity, it enjoins it to all ſorts of Perſons, and in all Conditions. As may be obſerved throughout the New Teſtament. St. *James* ſays the true Religion, and which alone renders us acceptable in the ſight of God, † *is to keep our ſelves pure and unſpotted from the World.* And St. *Paul*, ſpeaking of the Luſt of Uncleanneſs, expreſly affirms * this to be *the Will of God, even our Sanctification, that ye ſhould abſtain from Fornication, and that every one of us ſhould know how to poſſeſs his Veſſel in Sanctification and Honour.*

† S. Ja. 1. 27.

* 1 Theſſ. 4. 3. 4.

Which

Which Words plainly teach Chaſtity to be a General Duty. All Men have their own Body, and all ought to keep it pure, and conſequently Chaſtity ought to be the ſtudy of all whether Married, or Unmarried. Which is a ſufficient Proof that Uncleanneſs is forbidden to ſuch as are not yet engaged in Marriage. St. *Paul* ſays they ought to preſerve their Body in Purity and Holineſs. And after this it is very abſurd to pretend that Uncleanneſs never becomes a Crime till it arrives at Adultery, or an entire abandoning oneſelf to all Pollution.

But what we have yet farther to add will ſet this Truth in its full Light, and will make it abundantly evident, that St. *Paul* deſign'd nothing leſs than to condemn all Impurity of whatſoever kind.

CHAP. IV.

Some General Reflexions upon thoſe Paſſages of the New Teſtament, which reſpect Uncleanneſs.

NOW we ſhould paſs on to ſome more Particular Conſiderations, and expreſs and formal Proofs; but that it will be proper before we mention the Paſſages to be hereafter inſiſted upon, to make ſome reflexion in the firſt place, upon the Terms wherein this Sin is deſcribed; ſecondly, upon the Apoſtles manner of ſpeaking of it; and then, thirdly, upon the Reaſons they had to expreſs themſelves in this manner.

I. And

I. And first it is to be observed that the Apostles not only condemn Impurity in general, but distinguish also the several sorts of this Sin, as Adultery, Fornication or Whoring, and other Sins not necessary to be mentioned here. This Distinction is to be seen throughout the New Testament; as *Heb.* 13. 4. *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge*; and 1 *Cor.* 6. 9. *Neither Fornicators, nor Adulterers, nor the Abominable shall inherit the Kingdom of God.* St. *Paul* in this latter Passage specifies several different Sins; and proposes Adultery and Fornication, as two distinct Species of Impurity. He puts a difference between Fornicators and Adulterers, as well as between these and the Abominable, Idolaters, Drunkards, and other grievous Sinners.

The signification of the Word Adultery is what every body knows. None but can tell that it imports a Violation of the Marriage Covenant. And those called Fornicators or Whoremongers, are such as defile themselves in an Unmarried State.

And it is to be remember'd, the Apostles did not invent new Terms, or new Names, for Vices or Virtues, but made use of those which were in common use, and whose Meaning all could understand. For instance, when they spake of Drunkenness, or Covetousness, no body that heard them but immediately knew what they intended. In like manner common Usage had taught all, whether Jews or Gentiles, what Fornication and Whoring meant. The Pagan Authors had delivered themselves in the same Terms the Apostles did. It is true they had made use of them in different Senses; † sometimes for either Impurity at large, or for Adultery, and again at other times

† Πορνεία, Scortatio, μοιχεία.

for

for Impurity committed out of Marriage, and even ſimple Fornication *. And who then can doubt whether the Apoſtles condemned this Species of Uncleanneſs, eſpecially when they diſtinguiſh it from Adultery? However, this will be made yet more clear by a particular Enquiry into divers Paſſages, which can bear no other Senſe than this.

II. Let us conſider therefore what the Apoſtles ſay of Uncleanneſs. And there are two very particular Inſtances relating to it in the New Teſtament that call for our Attention. The former is that the holy Writers treat oftener of this than of any other Sin. Let any Man examine all the places in the New Teſtament, where mention is made of Vices and Sins, and he will find there is not any one other Crime ſo many times named as Uncleanneſs. The other Particular to be remarked, and which is peculiar to this Sin, is, that the Apoſtles ordinarily name it firſt, and in their Catalogues of Vices ſet it in the Front of all the reſt. This is a clear Caſe. † One need only run over the New Teſtament to be convinced of it. And the Reader will ſee it made out in the Remainder of this Chapter. Whence it appears very clearly, that Uncleanneſs is one of the principal Sins that the Apoſtles ſet themſelves to oppoſe; and that all Chriſtians are under a particular Obligation to renounce it.

III. The Apoſtles having ſhewn ſuch an Averſion to this Sin, it may juſtly be concluded that they had very good and ſubſtantial Reaſons for their ſo doing; which it will not be amiſs to relate in this place.

* *In this Senſe* Lucian *us'd the Word*, Μυθοι γελωτος. Fabuloſ. Dial. 21. Καὶ τὸν τῶν μυθοι γελωτος ὀνηθεὶς ἀνιτλῶ, &c.

† *See* S. Mar. 7. 21. Rom. 1. 26, *&c.* 1 Cor. 5. 11. *&* 6. 10. Gal. 5. 19. Coloſſ. 3 5, *&c.*

1. The

1. The first is the Strength of this Passion, and the Inclination Mankind have to whatsoever is pleasing to Flesh and Sense. This Inclination was one of the first and most fatal Effects, of that Change, and Corruption which our first Parent *Adam*'s Sin occasioned in his Posterity; and so makes it necessary to be the more carefully upon our Guard, against the Sin I am now discoursing of.

2. This Sin reigned amongst the Heathens; who lived in Pollution, and all sorts of Dissoluteness, and a Habit of indulging their own unruly Desires, and by this means gave occasion to the Apostles to represent them, as a People who had prostituted themselves to all Lasciviousness. And this in truth is the Character the Apostles chiefly give of them. † *God*, says St. *Paul*, *gave them up to their own vile Affections, and to Uncleanness through the Lusts of their own Hearts.* And a little after, * they *were filled with all Unrighteousness, Fornication, and Wickedness.* He says at another time, † that *being past Feeling, they gave themselves over to commit all Uncleanness with greediness.* Thus St. *Peter* testifies of those Idolaters, that they were so commonly used to live in Uncleanness, *that they were surprized at the Christians Refusal to *run with them into the same Excess of Riot*, or Dissoluteness. This being the Case with these Pagans, the Apostles who wrote either to such of them as were newly converted to Christianity, or to the *Jews* who lived amongst them, found it necessary to set themselves particularly against Impurity.

† Rom. 1. 24. 26.
* v. 29.
† Eph. 4. 19.
* 1 S. Pet. 4. 3.

3. There was a third Reason for them to speak often with great Freedom against this Sin; a peculiar Reason, and which related to those Times in which the Apostles lived; and it was the Cause they had to fear lest the Practice of it should be

a means of drawing the Chriſtians aſide into Idolatry and Apoſtacy. And ſince this gives a great light to the whole matter in hand, and helps to the underſtanding of a great many Texts in the Holy Scripture, where Uncleanneſs is ſpoken of, I ſhall beg leave ſomewhat to enlarge upon it.

We muſt know then that this Vice was not only very common amongſt the Heathens, as is ſhewn in the preceding Article; but moreover was made in ſome ſort a part of their Religion, and the Worſhip they paid to their falſe Deities. And no wonder, conſidering what impure Objects they had for their Adoration. Such as *Jupiter*, and *Venus* or *Aſtarte*, the Goddeſs of Luſt. Impurity was annexed to the Worſhip of Idols; and it was a natural Conſequent of the Feaſts, Sacrifices, and Revellings, which they kept in honour of their ſuppos'd Deities. Till at length it came to paſs, that this Wickedneſs was committed in the Places dedicated to the Service of their Idols, and theſe Places were filled with infamous Perſons. Which Cuſtom obtained in ſo many diſtant places, and grew ſo Publick, that Proſtitution came to be a ſort of Conſecration. And this is the reaſon why the Proſtitutes were anciently called by the ſame † קדשות Name with thoſe that were † *Conſecrated*. Heathen Authors will furniſh us with plenty of Proofs and Examples to this purpoſe. And ſome are to be met with in the Holy Scripture. This alſo gave occaſion for * divers Laws which occur in the Books of *Moſes*. It is obſerved in the Hiſtory of the *Iſraelites*, that Idolatry was often introduced by the aſſiſtance of Uncleanneſs. *Moſes* reports, *Numb.* 25. 1, 2. 3. that the Children of *Iſrael*, being led by the Daughters of the Idolatrous *Moabites*, to their Feaſts, and the Sacrifices of their Gods, they were ſeduced through *the Whore-*

* *See* Exod. 34. 15. Deut. 23. 18, *&c.*

dom

dom they had committed with them, and they did eat, and bowed down to their Gods. It was through this Luſt that *Solomon* † fell into Idolatry. In whoſe Son *Reboboam's* days the People alſo corrupted themſelves, and forſook the Service of the true God. And it is expreſsly recorded of them, that at this time, * *there were Sodomites in the Land, and they did according to all the Abominations of the Nations which the Lord had caſt out before them.* And the Author of the Hiſtory of the *Maccabees* giving an Account how the Temple had been prophaned by *Antiochus*, tells amongſt other things || that *the Gentiles had filled the Temple with Riot, and Revelling, and they dallied with Harlots, within the Circuit of the holy places.*

† 1 Kings, 11. 4.

* 1 Kings, 14. 22, 23, 24.

|| 2 Macc. 6. 4.

This Pagan Diſſoluteneſs reigned alſo in the Times of the Apoſtles. And it was ſo much the more to be feared that the Converts to Chriſtianity would be ſeduced by this bait, in that beſides the uſual Inclination Men have to Senſuality, theſe new Chriſtians, either were gained from the Pagans who had lived a long time in theſe Abominations, before their Converſion, or from the *Jews* who lived among theſe Pagans. The Apoſtles therefore ſet themſelves principally againſt this Vice, not only becauſe it is a heinous Sin in it ſelf, and diametrically oppoſite to that Holineſs which the Goſpel requires, but becauſe of the Danger the Chriſtians were in, of relapſing into Idolatry. And for this Reaſon it is, that * Idolatry is ſo frequently joined with Uncleanneſs, as well as with Drunkenneſs and Gluttony. Debauchery and Intemperance accompany'd the Heathens Worſhip. And the Chriſtians being invited to the Entertainments and Rejoicings which were made at the end of the Sacrifices which had been offered to Idols, might eaſily fall into Idolatry, unleſs they ſet themſelves to avoid theſe Occaſions,

* 1 Cor. 6. 10. 1 S. Pet. 4. 3, &c.

ſions, by living ſoberly and chaſtly. St. *Paul* makes this very evident, 1 *Cor.* 10. 6, 7, 8. Where to caution the Chriſtians againſt aſſiſting at the Idolatrous Feaſts, he propounds to them the Example of the *Iſraelites*, whom the *Moabitiſh* Women had drawn into Idolatry. Now *theſe things*, ſays he, *were our Examples, to the intent we ſhould not luſt after evil things as they alſo luſted. Neither be ye Idolaters, as were ſome of them, as it is written, The People ſate down to eat and drink*, namely in the Idol-Temples, *and roſe up to play*, to commit Wantonneſs and Lewdneſs.

To conclude this Point, the Hiſtory of the Primitive Church teaches, That the *Nicolaïtans*, the *Gnoſticks*, and other ſuch like Hereticks which aroſe at that time, were for introducing all at once both Fornication and Idolatry. As any one may read in the ſecond Chapter of St. *John*'s Revelation; or the ſecond Chapter of the ſecond Epiſtle of St. *Peter*.

This is one of the Reaſons the Apoſtles had to ſpeak ſo often againſt Uncleanneſs; but yet it is neither the only one, nor the moſt conſiderable. They condemned this Sin not only upon account of the Danger of Idolatry, but for other Reaſons too taken from the Nature of this Vice. As is our Buſineſs next to ſhew, in a more particular Diſcuſſion of the principal Places of the New Teſtament, where Impurity is treated of; and whence it will evidently appear, that not only an Indulging our ſelves in this infamous Sin is here forbidden, but that ſimple Fornication is condemned.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

A Particular Enquiry into thoſe ſeveral Paſſages, where Uncleanneſs is forbidden.

THoſe Words of our Bleſſed Saviour, St. *Mar.* 7. 21. call for our ſerious Attention. *From within, out of the Heart proceed Evil Thoughts, Adulteries, Fornications, Murders,* &c. After which he adds, *Ver.* 23. *All theſe evil things come from within, and defile the Man.* In theſe Words our Lord does not name Adultery only, but Fornication likewiſe, and diſtinguiſhes them from one another. But what ſays he of this latter Sin? It is plain he puts it in the Rank of things evil in their own nature. For his Deſign in this Chapter is to diſtinguiſh between Evil and Indifferent things, between what pollutes a Man, and what does not. He lets us ſee the Phariſees were deceived in thinking they ſhould be defiled by eating with unwaſhen Hands, according to the Tradition of the *Jews*. He tells them this is not that which defiles a Man, and renders him blame-worthy, but that which comes from within the Heart, namely Adulteries and Fornications. He ſays expreſly that theſe are wicked, or evil in their own nature, and ſo render a Man impure. This Paſſage ſhews alſo that our Saviour reckons Uncleanneſs in the ſame rank with Robbery, and Murder, and other heinous Crimes, which all the World owns to be naturally evil. So that after this ſo expreſs Declaration of our Saviour Chriſt, it cannot be doubted but Uncleanneſs is a Sin, and indeed a great Sin.

It will not be beſides our purpoſe in this place to enquire into that Law which we have recorded, *Acts* 15. 28, 29. in theſe Words. *It ſeemed good to the Holy Ghoſt and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than theſe neceſſary things, that ye abſtain from Meats offered to Idols, and from Blood, and from things ſtrangled, and from Fornication.* For the right underſtanding of which Law, it is to be obſerv'd, That it related to thoſe who from among the Heathens were converted to the Chriſtian Religion; as appears by the whole Chapter, and more particularly by the Inſcription of that Letter of the Apoſtles, whereof this Decree is a Part. It was at that time a Subject of Debate, Whether thoſe Pagans that took upon them the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity were bound to be circumciſed, and obſerve the other Ceremonial Ordinances of *Moſes*. And the Apoſtles being aſſembled to decide this Queſtion, pronounce it not neceſſary for the Gentiles to ſubject themſelves to Circumciſion nor the Ceremonies of the Law. But yet they held it requiſite to forbid them *Meats offered to Idols, Blood, things ſtrangled, and Fornication.* Of all the Ceremonial Laws the Apoſtles impoſe none upon the Gentile Converts, except ſuch as related to things offered in Sacrifice to Idols, Blood, and things ſtrangled; which alſo were forbidden in the ſeventeenth Chapter of *Leviticus*.

The Apoſtles would have the Gentiles abſtain from theſe things for the ſame reaſon for which God had formerly forbidden them to the *Jews*; that is to ſay, the more effectually to ſecure them from Idolatry. The Truth is, theſe were Idolatrous and Superſtitious Cuſtoms of the Heathens, and Rites which accompanied their falſe Worſhip, as divers Authors have teſtified very fully. It therefore concern'd the Apoſtles at this time, to forbid the Chriſtians to eat of ſuch Food, as had been

been offered to Idols, of Blood, and of things ſtrangled, becauſe in eating of theſe they incurred the Danger of falling into Idolatry; and moreover becauſe they might hereby ſcandalize either their Brethren, or perhaps the *Jews*. Touching which matter whoſoever pleaſes may conſult the eighth Chapter of the firſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*. At the ſame time the Apoſtles forbad Impurity, in conjunction with theſe Meats offered to Idols, Blood, and things ſtrangled; becauſe, as has been ſaid, it was one Conſequent of the Worſhip of falſe Gods, and of the Idol Feaſts.

If what I have been diſcourſing be well underſtood, and due Attention be given to the Deſign and Spirit of this Apoſtolical Canon, and the Reaſons whereupon it is grounded, there will be no difficulty in apprehending how the Apoſtles came to join Impurity with things indifferent in their own nature. They did it upon the account of theſe Uſages being joined to, and as it were inſeparable from the Heathen Worſhip. I confeſs there is a great difference between Uncleanneſs and ſuch Meats as the Apoſtles here forbid to be eaten. Theſe Meats are not evil in themſelves; nor were the Chriſtians required at that time to abſtain from them, but only for fear of being betray'd into Idolatry, or of giving Scandal. In other Caſes, where was no ſuch appearance of Danger, the uſe of theſe things might be permitted. So ſaith St. *Paul* in the eighth and tenth Chapters of the firſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, in regard to things ſacrificed to Idols. But Uncleanneſs is in its own Nature unlawful, it *defiles a Man*, and Chriſtians are under a Neceſſity of ſhunning it; and not only for the Cauſes mentioned in relation to the Meats here forbidden; but for other Reaſons, taken from the nature of the Sin it ſelf, and the Turpitude of it. This is plain from

the foregoing Conſiderations, and the Paſſages I have cited, and thoſe others I have yet to add.

The Apoſtle St. *Paul* gives this Advice, *Rom.* 13. 13. *Let us walk honeſtly as in the day time, not in Rioting and Drunkenneſs, not in Chambering and Wantonneſs,* or Uncleanneſs and Laſciviouſneſs. Here the Apoſtle reflects upon the Debaucheries and infamous Familiarities of the Pagans, and ſpeaks of them as inconſiſtent with a regular and orderly Converſation, and every way unworthy of ſuch as enjoy the Light of the Goſpel.

The firſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians* contains divers Paſſages very expreſs to this purpoſe; particularly in its fifth, ſixth, and ſeventh Chapters.

In the fifth Chapter St. *Paul* very earneſtly exhorts not only to fly Uncleanneſs, but thoſe too that were guilty of it. He would have People ſeparate from theſe, and caſt them out of the Church. From whence it is eaſy to judge, in what Deteſtation Impurity is to be had amongſt Chriſtians. *I wrote to you,* ſays he, *in an Epiſtle,* and *Now have I written unto you, not to company with Fornicators,* ver. 9. 11. He would have them excommunicated; and puts them in the Front of thoſe Sinners, that ought not to be ſuffered in the Church. So it follows, *If any Man that is called a Brother be a Fornicator, or an Idolater,* &c. *with ſuch an one eat not,* ver. 11. and ver. 13. *Put away from among your ſelves that wicked Perſon.*

In the ſixth Chapter he inſiſts farther upon the ſame Subject, but after ſomewhat a more particular manner. Here he makes it the peculiar Matter of his Diſcourſe; he argues concerning it, and ſets himſelf purpoſely to prove that Uncleanneſs is highly criminal in a Chriſtian; he offers Variety of Reaſons, and ſeveral Conſiderations, ſo as he is not wont to do when treating of other Vices. This courſe he takes, becauſe he found it neceſ-

neceſſary to convince the *Corinthians* of the Dreadfulneſs of this Sin.

He tells them, *ver.* 10. that *Neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor the Effeminate, nor Abuſers of themſelves with Mankind, &c. ſhall inherit the Kingdom of God.* In which Declaration he includes all ſorts of Unclean Perſons, whether Adulterers or Fornicators, or thoſe that defile themſelves in any other manner, and ſubjects them all to the ſame Condemnation with thoſe that committed the fouleſt Crimes, of being excluded from the Kingdom of God. Then he repreſents to theſe *Corinthians*, ver. 11. how God had extended his Favour to divers of them, in recovering them from their Pollutions, and waſhing them with the Blood of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the Power of the Holy Ghoſt, by calling them to the Chriſtian Religion; and hereby teaches them that they were indiſpenſably engaged to avoid all Uncleanneſs, and that this Sin is incompetible with a Profeſſion of Chriſtianity.

But then foraſmuch as ſome might be apt to object, That the Uſe of thoſe things which are neceſſary for the Body is allow'd us; for Inſtance, that there is no Sin in eating whatſoever ſort of Meat; and that the Caſe is the ſame as to Uncleanneſs. To this St. *Paul* makes two Replies.

1. He ſays, *ver.* 12. Though a thing be permitted, there is no need that it ſhould be always put in practice. *All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any thing.* Which Words import not, that all things are allowed without diſtinction; but that it is not always requiſite to do what is allowed; and that Men ought not to abuſe that Liberty, which is granted them of uſing indifferent things; leſt ſo they be inſlaved to theſe things, this being directly contrary to Piety. This is the Caſe of the Senſualiſts and

Licentious, who make themſelves Slaves to the Fleſh, and have their *Belly for their God,* as St. *Paul* ſpeaks, *Phil.* 3. 19. The Apoſtle adds, *ver.* 13. *Meats are for the Belly, and the Belly for Meats, but God ſhall deſtroy both it and them.* And theſe Words explain the foregoing, and teach us that when St. *Paul* had ſaid, *All things are lawful for me,* he did not mean this in general of every thing, but only of all Meats. And this he ſaid, becauſe thoſe that would entice Chriſtians to Impurity, made it their Buſineſs to perſuade them, that the Uſe of all ſorts of Meats, not excluding ſuch as had been ſacrificed to Idols, was permitted them. Wherefore he tells them the Uſe of Meats was permitted and neceſſary, that God had created them for the Suſtenance of Man, and that Man was of ſuch a Conſtitution, as to have conſtant need of them for his Support. Whereby the Apoſtle intimates that no Meat is by nature polluted and unlawful, and that it is allowed to uſe any ſort of it; only with this Reſerve, to which himſelf here directs, that we do it with Diſcretion, and ſo as that it may never become an Occaſion of our either ſinning againſt our ſelves, or ſcandalizing our Neighbour. But withal he at the ſame time adds, that *God will one day deſtroy both the Meats and the Belly,* as much as to ſay, The Uſe of theſe things ſhall be aboliſhed at the Reſurrection; and hereby gives us to underſtand, that the Uſe of Meats relating only to this animal and corporal Life, and being therefore to continue only for a time, it is highly unbecoming Chriſtians, who profeſs to have more elevated Affections, and to aſpire after a Spiritual, Heavenly, and Immortal Life, to ſet their Minds upon what is pleaſing to the Fleſh.

This is what St. *Paul* diſcourſes of Meats; and it is his firſt Anſwer to thoſe who pretend an Allowance

lowance of all things relating to the Body. But he proceeds farther, and gives quite a different account of Uncleanneſs, from what he does of Meats. *The Body*, ſays he, *is not for Fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the Body*. The Import of which Words is, that the Body was not given us to be employ'd to any infamous purpoſe, and that Chriſtians are by no means to take the ſame Liberty here, that they may in Meats. St. *Paul* could not more clearly inſtruct us, that the Caſe is not the ſame with Uncleanneſs, and with the Uſe of Meats, and that it ought not to be ranked amongſt things Indifferent and purely Natural, or perhaps neceſſary, as Eating and Drinking are. *The Body is made for Meats, but it is not made for Uncleanneſs*; on the contrary, it is made for the Lord, and is to be employ'd only to holy Purpoſes, and which are according to the Will of God. He adds, *And the Lord is for the Body; and God hath both raiſed up the Lord, and will alſo raiſe up us by his own Power*; that is to ſay, Our Bodies belong to God as well as our Souls; he has conſecrated them to himſelf by the Redemption wrought for them; and he will raiſe them up at the laſt Day, to the end he may be glorify'd both in our Bodies and in our Souls. This Right then which the Lord has over us, and particularly over our Bodies, and the Glory whereto he has ordained us, lay an indiſſoluble Obligation upon us, to keep our Bodies undefiled, ſhunning all ſort of Pollution, whereby to prepare them for a happy Reſurrection, and an Admiſſion into the Kingdom of Heaven.

However, leſt any ſhould pretend that Uncleanneſs is no hindrance but that our Bodies may ſtill belong to the Lord, and may be raiſed in his due time, and enter into his Glory; the Apoſtle ſhews the Impoſſibility of this, and that the Sin

of Uncleanneſs deprives Men of Communion with *Jeſus Chriſt*, ver. 15. *Know ye not that your Bodies are the Members of Jeſus Chriſt?* He ſuppoſes our whole ſelves to belong to Chriſt, and more particularly that our Bodies are to be employ'd in his Service, and the promoting our own Happineſs; as all Chriſtians are bound to confeſs. And the Thought hereof ought to breed in every one of us a Deteſtation of Uncleanneſs. The next Words are, *Shall I then take away the Members of Chriſt, and make them the Members of an Harlot?* And theſe Words imply two things. *Firſt*, That it is a moſt unworthy Act to take away a Member of Chriſt; it is to offer him the utmoſt Affront; it is to force from him what is truly his own, and what he has purchaſed with no leſs a Price than his own Blood. And this Affront is ſo much the more outrageous, in that the Offender thus quits his Bleſſed Redeemer, to join himſelf to an infamous Perſon. The very Thought of ſuch an Exchange is enough to ſtrike a Man with Horror; and this St. *Paul* teſtifies in the following Words, *God forbid!* This is the moſt deplorable ſtate a Man can bring himſelf into, inaſmuch as whoſoever is not a Member of *Jeſus Chriſt*, muſt unavoidably periſh. In the ſecond place St. *Paul* notes that this is the certain Effect of Uncleanneſs, that this is a Sin which breaks off Communion with Chriſt, and renders ſuch as are guilty of it the Members of an Harlot. And this Doctrine he confirms in the Verſe next following.

What, know ye not, that he which is joined to an Harlot, is one Body with her? For it is written, they two ſhall be one Fleſh. Here the Apoſtle refers to what God had ſaid upon the Creation of the Man and the Woman; he ſaith, *They two ſhall be one Fleſh.* Theſe Words properly relate to Marriage; nevertheleſs St. *Paul* applies them

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to Uncleanneſs, inaſmuch as though the Union of Unclean Perſons is Unlawful, and God has no where intimated the leaſt Approbation of it, it is however in reality ſuch an Union as of two makes one Fleſh. And by Conſequence whoſoever falls into this Sin, becomes one Body with, and a Member of, a Harlot. Which is exceedingly unworthy of a Chriſtian, and inconſiſtent with our Union to our Bleſſed Lord. As St. *Paul* maintains, by what he ſubjoins in the next Verſe. Ver. 17. *But he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit with him.* The Meaning of which Aſſertion is, That thoſe who are joined to Chriſt by a true Faith, are animated by his Spirit, have the ſame Will, the ſame Purpoſes, the ſame Deſigns with with him, and ſo are utterly eſtranged from all Thoughts of forſaking him to follow the Deſires of the Fleſh, and to join themſelves to diſſolute and unclean Perſons.

To this purpoſe he proceeds, *ver.* 18. *Flee Fornication. Every Sin that a Man doth is without the Body; but he that committeth Fornication ſinneth againſt his own Body.* Whereby St. *Paul* does not intend only, that Unclean Perſons hurt their own Bodies, and bring divers Miſchiefs upon themſelves; for there are ſeveral other Sins which hurt the Body likewiſe; but he doubtleſs ſays it for theſe two Reaſons. *Firſt,* becauſe this Sin is directly oppoſite to our Union with Chriſt, ſeeing it cannot be committed without making us one Body with the Harlot. The Body ceaſes thenceforwards to be a Member of *Jeſus Chriſt,* as the Apoſtle has already taught, and by Conſequence they that indulge themſelves in this Sin, are great Enemies to themſelves, and ſin againſt their own Body. *Secondly,* St. *Paul* ſays this becauſe Uncleanneſs being of a ſhameful and infamous nature, it pollutes and diſhonours our Bodies, and our Perſons,

ſons, beyond other Sins. Which Obſervation of the Apoſtle is explained by what he affirms of the Heathens, *Rom.* 1. 24. that *being given up to Uncleanneſs, they diſhonoured their own Bodies between themſelves.*

St. *Paul* urges another Conſideration, *ver.* 19. *What, know ye not that your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt which is in you, which ye have of God?* And this is a very powerful Conſideration for diſſuading from Uncleanneſs, being taken from the Glory whereto God has raiſed us even in regard to our Bodies. They are the Temples of the Holy Spirit, becauſe the Holy Spirit dwells in us, and pours forth his Benefits upon us, ſanctifies us, and conſecrates us to the Service of God. Wherefore our Bodies partaking of this Honour, we are bound to preſerve them in Purity, and to employ them to holy Purpoſes. For if the Places dedicated to the Worſhip of God, may not be prophaned by any Pollution, but muſt be kept pure and undefiled, how great ought the Holineſs of our Bodies to be, ſeeing God has condeſcended to make them the Temples of his Holy Spirit? This Reflexion of St. *Paul* lets us ſee plainly, that whenever any give themſelves over to Uncleanneſs, they ceaſe to be the Temples of the Holy Spirit, juſt as the Apoſtle had ſaid before, that they ceaſe to be the Members of *Jeſus Chriſt.* Which ſhews this Sin to be the Occaſion that the Holy Spirit of God withdraws from the Heart of ſuch as are guilty of it, becauſe this Spirit cannot dwell with Pollution.

Finally, St. *Paul* concludes his Diſcourſe concerning the Sin I am treating of, with this Advice, *ver.* 19, 20. *Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a Price: therefore glorify God in your Body, and in your Spirit, which are Gods.* Which the Apoſtle might ſpeak with the greater Earneſtneſs, to con-

convince us that it is in no wiſe permitted us to order our ſelves according to our own Deſires, and to follow the Motions and Inclinations of the Fleſh; but that we are to pay an abſolute Submiſſion to the Will of him whoſe we are. As we are Chriſtians, whom our Lord has purchaſed with his own moſt precious Blood, he has an abſolute Dominion over us; our Bodies, our Souls, our whole ſelves are entirely his, and may not be put to any other Uſe than what is agreeable to his moſt holy Will.

I cannot forbear repeating it, that this Chapter calls for an eſpecial Attention; and that St. *Paul* does not only exhort the *Corinthians* to fly Uncleanneſs, but proves by ſeveral Arguments, how unbecoming Chriſtians this Sin is; he propoſes his Reaſons with great Earneſtneſs and Vehemence; he inſiſts upon it; and makes uſe of the moſt powerful Diſſuaſives from it. And after all this can it poſſibly be made a Queſtion, Whether Uncleanneſs be ſinful, and abſolutely forbidden?

I know not how what I have ſaid can poſſibly be anſwered, nor to what Evaſions our Libertines can have recourſe, for eluding the force of theſe Paſſages. It may perhaps be pretended that St. *Paul* does not condemn ſimple Fornication, but only the utmoſt Exceſs of Impurity, or that Crime which is committed with profligate and proſtitute Perſons. Nor do I deny but he might have that Crime in his view, in this Chapter; yet whoſoever ſhall ſeriouſly attend to all that has been ſaid, and ſhall weigh all the Reaſons and the Proofs that have been alledged, will eaſily obſerve that this is not all the Apoſtle condemns, and that the Arguments he produces are levelled againſt all manner of Uncleanneſs. However to ſet this matter in its due Light, and to ſtop the Mouths of ſuch as would try

try to elude the Proofs brought from this Chapter, I proceed to make it indiſputably evident, That all ſort of Uncleanneſs, that ſimple Fornication, in a word, that all that is without Marriage is forbidden to Chriſtians.

To prove this we need only paſs on to the Seventh Chapter of this ſame Epiſtle. St. *Paul* having ſpoken of Impurity in the preceding Chapter, examines in this into certain Queſtions relating to Marriage. Whence I might offer divers Conſiderations; but I ſhall content my ſelf to touch only the Chief of them. Now what we read here is ſo clear and expreſs, that nothing can be imagined plainer or more deciſive. In the beginning of the Chapter St. *Paul* deſigning to anſwer thoſe Queſtions about Marriage and Celibacy, of which the Church of *Corinth* had deſired his Reſolution, tells them *it is good for a Man not to touch a Woman*, hereby recommending the ſtate of Celibacy as preferable to that of Matrimony. He deſcribes the ſtate of Celibacy in theſe Words, *Not to touch a Woman*, which is a plain Proof that all who are Unmarried are to live in perfect Continence, and abſtain from all impure Converſation, of whatſoever nature. And to the ſame purpoſe, *ver.* 34. he declares the ſtate of an unmarried Woman to be this, that ſhe *careth for the things of the Lord, that ſhe may be holy both in Body and in Spirit.*

Again the Apoſtle ſays, *ver.* 2. *Nevertheleſs becauſe of*, or to avoid, *Fornication, let every Man have his own Wife, and let every Woman have her own Huſband.* It is as clear as the Day that St. *Paul* calls all that is committed out of Marriage, after whatever manner, by the Name of Fornication. Nor could he have more expreſly ſignify'd what he means by Fornication, and how far the Importance of this Word is to be extended. *To avoid*

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Fornication, let every one have his own Wife, &c. This ſhews clearly both the Sin ſpoken of, and the Obligation Chriſtians are under to avoid it; that the Apoſtle impoſes upon unmarried Perſons of either Sex a Neceſſity of living in Chaſtity; and that out of Marriage all is ſinful.

St. *Paul* after this having mentioned the Duties of Married Perſons, returns *ver.* 8, 9. to ſpeak again of the Unmarried, *I ſay therefore to the Unmarried and Widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain themſelves, let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn.* Which Words need no Comment upon them. Either they have no Senſe at all, or they ſignify a Neceſſity of living in an exact and perfect Continence, or elſe of Marrying; and that there is no Medium between theſe two Eſtates. If Uncleanneſs were not a Sin, in a Word, if any thing had been permitted beſides Marriage, the Apoſtle could not have ſpoken in this manner, without laying a Snare for People's Conſciences; neither would he have ſaid that Marriage was the only means of avoiding Uncleanneſs, the only Remedy againſt Incontinence. Hence therefore I conclude, that St. *Paul* condemns not only the laſt Exceſſes of Uncleanneſs, and that unbounded Liberty ſome may take this way, but even ſimple Fornication; and this ſo plainly, that I perſuade my ſelf none can have any Scruple remaining concerning it. Let us paſs to St. *Paul*'s other Epiſtles.

Gal. 5. 19. The Apoſtle undertaking to explain what it is to live after the Fleſh, ſays, *The Works of the Fleſh are manifeſt*, or eaſy to be known. Then he proceeds to enumerate the principal Sins of the Fleſh, and names firſt *Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Laſciviouſneſs.* He names theſe Sins before others, as being moſt manifeſt, and moſt eaſily diſcernible. And he does not name Adultery alone,

alone, but joins with it Fornication, together with Uncleanneſs and Laſciviouſneſs, which comprehends all the Species of Impurity. He joins with this Sin, *Witchcraft*, *Murder*, and other Crimes. And he expreſly proteſts, that *they which do ſuch things ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* By which Paſſage it appears, that if there be any one Sin that excludes from Heaven, Impurity does it.

The ſame Apoſtle treating of the Duties of the Chriſtian Life, in the fourth and fifth Chapters of the Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, inſiſts chiefly upon the Renunciation of Uncleanneſs. He profeſſes that Chriſtians may not live as the Pagans did, who were overwhelmed with thick Darkneſs, and ſo fell into terrible Exorbitances. And to ſet forth their exceſſive Corruption, in its due Colours, he offers at no other Proof but the Impurity of their Lives. *The Gentiles*, ſays he, *being paſt feeling, have given themſelves over unto Laſciviouſneſs, to commit all Uncleanneſs with greedineſs.* He exhorts the Chriſtians to be by no means like them; and recommends Chaſtity to them, not only in their Actions, but in their Diſcourſe; *Let no corrupt Communication proceed out of your Mouth.*

In the fifth Chapter he continues his Exhortation to a holy Life; and generally what he preſſes is with relation to Impurity. Ver. 3. 4. *But Fornication, and all Uncleanneſs, let it not be once named among you, as becometh Saints. Neither Filthineſs, nor fooliſh Talking, which are not convenient.* And to add the more weight to this his Exhortation, he ſubjoins *ver.* 5. *For this ye know, that no Whoremonger, nor unclean Perſon, hath any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Chriſt, and of God.* And not content with having denounced this ſo dreadful a Puniſhment to the Impure, and leſt any ſhould not be duly ſenſible of the great Evil of the Sin to which he threatens it, he repeats his Denunciation in

theſe

theſe Words; *Let no Man deceive you with vain Words; for becauſe of theſe things cometh the Wrath of God upon the Children of Diſobedience.* And again he cautions and preſſes them carefully to avoid this Sin, and all ſuch Perſons as would invite them to it. Ver. 7. *Be not ye therefore Partakers with them*; and again, *ver.* 11. 12. *Have no Fellowſhip with the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs, but rather reprove them; for it is a ſhame even to ſpeak of thoſe things which are done of them in ſecret.* The Tendency and Deſign of which whole Diſcourſe is to inſpire the Chriſtians with an Abhorrence of Impurity.

It is obſervable likewiſe that he purſues the ſame Deſign, in the third Chapter of the Epiſtle to the *Coloſſians*. According to his uſual Method, he begins his Exhortation with a particular reſpect to Chaſtity, *ver.* 5. *Mortify therefore your Members which are upon the Earth, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, inordinate Affections, evil Concupiſcence.* And his manner of ſpeaking concerning Impurity is very remarkable. He diſtinguiſhes this Sin from others, and makes it an Article by it ſelf; he inſiſts upon it more largely than upon the reſt; he enforces his Exhortation with both Menaces and Motives, *ver.* 6, 7. After which reſuming his Diſcourſe, he treats of other Sins; but then he but lightly touches upon them in a word or two. Ver. 8. *Put off all theſe, Anger, Wrath, Malice, Blaſphemy*, &c. Which is a farther Confirmation, that of all ſorts of Sins, there is none the Apoſtle ſeems more avowedly to condemn than that of Uncleanneſs.

In the fourth Chapter of the firſt Epiſtle to the *Theſſalonians*, ſee how he begins his Recommendation of Holineſs. Ver. 2, 3, 4, 5. *Ye know what Commandments we gave you by the Lord Jeſus For this is the Will of God, even your Sanctification, that ye ſhould abſtain from Fornication; that every one of you*

ſhould

ſhould know how to poſſeſs his Veſſel (that is, his Body) *in Sanctification and Honour; not in the Luſt of Concupiſcence, even as the Gentiles which know not God.* Upon which Words divers Reflexions naturally ariſe. For inſtance, St. *Paul* ſays, the Will of God, and one of the principal Commands of *Jeſus Chriſt*, is, That we live chaſtly: Hereby teſtifying that without Chaſtity, there is no Holineſs or Obedience to the Divine Will; and conſequently no Hope of Salvation. He ſays that it is *the Will of God that we abſtain from Uncleanneſs*, that is, that we perfectly renounce it, and in no wiſe ſuffer our ſelves to be betray'd into it. And again he more fully explains himſelf, by declaring that *every one of us* ought to poſſeſs, or preſerve his Body in Holineſs and Purity; as if he ſhould have ſaid, That all ſorts of Perſons without exception ought to be very watchful over their own Bodies to preſerve them from all manner of Pollution, and to live in Continence and Chaſtity. And he proves all Chriſtians to be under this Obligation, by declaring it unlawful for them to follow the inordinate Deſires of the Fleſh, as the Gentiles do who know not God.

Nor may we omit what is affirmed in the thirteenth Chapter of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, ver. 4. *Marriage is honourable in all, and the Bed undefiled; but Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge.* We need only read theſe Words to convince us, that Marriage is a Holy and Honourable State, provided that we live chaſtly in it; but withal that God will puniſh all unclean Perſons; as well thoſe that violate the Sanctity of Marriage by Adultery, as thoſe who live incontinently out of Marriage. The Oppoſition St. *Paul* makes between Adultery and Fornication on the one hand, and Marriage on the other, ſhews plainly that except in the Caſe of chaſt and pure Marriage, all

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is faulty; and as Marriage is an honourable State, ſo Uncleanneſs is juſt matter of Reproach and Infamy. The Apoſtle would not have put Fornication in the ſame Claſs with Adultery, if it were of an indifferent nature; nor would have threaten'd thoſe that fall into it with the Judgment of God, as he does the Adulterers.

I might have cited a great number of Texts out of the New Teſtament, and by enquiring into the other Epiſtles, particularly the ſecond Epiſtle of St. *Peter*, Chap. 2. and the Epiſtle of St. *Jude*, might have ſhewn that Impurity was the principal Character, which the Apoſtles gave to the falſe Chriſtians, and falſe Teachers of thoſe Times. But I will not enlarge upon this Subject. What I have ſaid is enough to let every one ſee who does not wilfully ſhut his Eyes, that Uncleanneſs is condemn'd through the whole New Teſtament; and more particularly that Fornication is a Sin. This Nature teaches, and the Old Law confirms; but the Goſpel gives ſuch abundant Evidence to the Truth of it, that there is no being certain of any thing in Religion, if not of this.

CHAP. VI.

Of Adultery.

AFter what has been diſcourſed of Uncleanneſs and Fornication, there will be no need of treating at large of Adultery. The Conſiderations which have been offered againſt Uncleanneſs in general, are yet of greater Force when apply'd to this Vice. But however there are other

particular Reaſons beſides theſe, which plainly diſcover the Enormity of it.

I. A very little Attention will ſuffice to inform us, that it violates the moſt ſacred Laws, and in particular thoſe of Marriage, which are ſo ſerviceable, and ſo neceſſary to the Good of Mankind. Theſe Laws of Marriage have in all Ages been looked upon as inviolable, and are eſpecially to be ſo eſteemed by all who are inſtructed in the Doctrines of Religion, and are ſatisfy'd that God is the Author of Marriage. It was God who in the Beginning created one Man and one Woman, and ſaid, *They two ſhould be one Fleſh.* Here is the firſt Inſtitution of Marriage; and our Bleſſed Lord cites it in his Goſpel, St. *Matth.* 19. 4. to prove the Unlawfulneſs of thoſe Divorces, which had obtained among the *Jews*. Whence it is eaſy to judge what Opinion each one ought to have of Adultery. For upon Suppoſition that Divorcing is contrary to the Law of Marriage, Adultery is yet more oppoſite to it. If our Lord Chriſt ſays, that thoſe who put away their Wives without any juſt Cauſe, to marry others, or that marry them who have in this manner been put away, are guilty of Sin; What muſt be ſaid of thoſe who being under the Bonds of Marriage, yet abandon themſelves to Uncleanneſs? Thoſe Engagements which are inviolable even from the nature of Marriage, become much more ſo amongſt Chriſtians, by the Faith mutually given at the Entrance upon this State, and the ſolemn Promiſes then made, in the Preſence of God, and by all that is moſt ſacred. So that the Violaters of theſe Engagements and Promiſes, in breaking their Conjugal Faith, are juſtly chargeable with the utmoſt Perfidiouſneſs, and undoubted Perjury.

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What I here ſay relates equally to all whether Men or Women. Nor ſhall I ſtand to enquire in this place, whether the Crime is greater, on the Husband's ſide, or on the Wife's. In ſome reſpects the Fault of the Woman is the worſe, and in others that of the Husband exceeds it. But be this as it will, it is certain that in regard to the Divine Inſtitution, and the Nature, and End of Marriage, and to Right Reaſon, the Engagements are Equal on both ſides, and both Husband and Wife are under the ſame Obligation of Fidelity to each other. This appears from what our Saviour diſcourſes concerning Divorce, St. *Mar.* 10. 11. *Whoſoever ſhall unjuſtly put away his Wife, and marry another, committeth Adultery againſt her.* St. *Paul* ſays expreſly, 1 *Cor.* 7. 3, 4, 5. *The Husband hath not power over his own Body,* or is not Maſter of it, *but the Wife; and the Wife hath not power over her own Body, but the Husband.* Whereto he alſo ſubjoins divers other Conſiderations †, which put it beyond all Diſpute or Contradiction, that the Engagements are reciprocal, and the Right equal on both ſides. This he ſuppoſes throughout the whole Chapter, as every one muſt ſee that reads it with any manner of Attention. Beſides, that I may juſt mention it by the bye, the Words now cited are an inconteſtable Argument againſt Polygamy; as well as thoſe at *ver.* 2. *Let every Man have his own Wife, and every Woman her own Huſband.* Indeed his whole Diſcourſe reſtrains Marriage to Two Perſons. And ſo the Apoſtle teaches it to be as little in the power of the Husband to have many Wives, as it is in the Power of the Wife to have many Husbands.

† *See v.* 10, 11, *&c.*

If we reflect moreover upon what has been argued, to ſhew the Advantage of Marriage to Society, and the Welfare of Families, we ſhall ſoon be convinced, that theſe Effects ſo highly bene-

ficial to Mankind, are not to be expected any longer than its mutual Obligations are inviolably obſerved. Adultery deſtroys the Foundation of that Peace and Quiet of Families which is deſign'd by it, that Union and Happineſs of the Married Perſons, and the good Education of their Children; and inſtead hereof introduces Trouble, Diviſion, Jealouſy, Hatred, and other Miſchiefs innumerable. We have likewiſe ſeen that Fathers are under a natural Obligation to take care of, bring up, and love their Children, and that to this purpoſe it is required they ſhould know them, that they may look after them, and live with them. And this Conſideration ſhould ſatisfy us, that Adultery is inevitably attended with divers other Crimes, and moſt heinous Inſtances of Injuſtice, and that the Conſequents of it are very terrible. It hinders Parents Care of their Children, and occaſions their leaving them expoſed to the wide World, brings ſtrange Children into Families, and robs the right Heirs of the Portion of Goods that God and Nature had allotted them. I will not enlarge upon theſe Conſiderations, nor mention ſome others that might be added, for fear of being tedious, and becauſe they ſo readily occur of themſelves, and every one is ſo ſenſible of them, that there is none but muſt own Adultery to be a moſt heinous, notorious Crime.

II. Yet I muſt obſerve in the Second Place, that the Obſervations which may be made againſt Adultery, are ſo natural, and ſo convincing, that they have always been taken notice of. It has been acknowledged in all Ages, that this Sin is deſtructive of Juſtice, Order, and the Good of Society. And the Law whereby it ſtands condemned, is not ſuch as thoſe which are made for ſome one particular Country; but it is of general Obligation, and as ancient as the World it ſelf.

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It has been consented to at all Times, and in all Places; and there have been very few Laws besides, that have obtained a like Universal Approbation. Whenever we read the Histories, and Statute-Books, the Opinions, and Customs, of the different Nations of the World, we cannot but take notice how Adultery has been constantly condemn'd. Uncleanness was too commonly practised among the Heathens; yet not so generally, but that Marriage was ever respected by them, and Adultery looked upon as an abominable Wickedness, and which they thought not undeserving to be punished with Death. This all who have been any whit conversant in History and Antiquity cannot but be sensible of.

Nor do only particular Authors give this Representation of it; as *Aristotle*, who determines † that Adultery, whether it be in Man or Woman, *ought to be put in the Rank of the foulest and most infamous Enormities*; but we have also the Concurrence of Legislators, and of whole Countries. The *Egyptians*, the *Lacedemonians*, the *Greeks*, the *Romans*, the *Goths*, the ancient *Germans*, have forbidden Adultery under the severest Penalties, and almost all under Pain of Death. And even at this day it escapes not better amongst the *Africans* and *Americans*.

It is also to be noted, that it was not only forbidden, but the Practice of it was very rarely known amongst these People; and * *Plutarch* and other Authors give such an Account of it, as may well put us Christians to the blush. And if per-

† Polit. l. 7.

* Plutarch *says, in his* Laconick Apothegms, *that Adultery was heretofore looked upon as* Lacedemon, *as impossible and incredible; and gives this Reason of his Assertion, That needless Ornaments, and Perfumes, Superfluity and Luxury were banished that City.*

haps it be pretended that whilſt theſe Heathens refrained from Adultery, they did it not from any Senſe they had of its Guilt, but only for fear of the Puniſhment to which they ſhould thereby expoſe themſelves; and that it was thought unlawful only becauſe it had been ſo ſeverely forbidden; I do not deny this, and muſt own that Impunity is the Cauſe of its becoming ſo uſual as it is in our Days. Yet I muſt affirm that it was not barely a Fear of the Laws that made this to be reckon'd a Crime; for they who made theſe Laws, and ſettled theſe Penalties, did it not from a Senſe of Fear, but for Reaſons taken from the Nature of the Thing itſelf. Now the if Pagans had this Notion of Adultery, much more ought Chriſtians to have it in Deteſtation. And we may aſſure ourſelves, theſe Idolatrous Nations will one day riſe up in Judgment againſt thoſe, who living in the Church of Chriſt, give themſelves up to this horrible Wickedneſs, and will not be with-held from it by the Light of the Goſpel, and the Dread of Eternal Vengeance.

III. And now to come to the Holy Scriptures, and to begin with the Times preceding the *Moſaick* Law; it is plain, Adultery was then accounted amongſt the Blackeſt of Crimes. *Job* ſays, Chap. 31. 11. *It is an heinous Crime, yea it is an Iniquity to be puniſhed by the Judges.* And *Joſeph* before the Days of *Job*, teſtifies what an Abhorrence he had of it, by the Anſwer he gave to *Potiphar's* Wife, when ſhe would have enticed him to it. Gen. 39. 9. *How can I do this great Wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?* And if we look ſtill backwarder, we ſhall find in the twelfth and twentieth Chapters of *Geneſis*, how *Pharaoh* King of *Egypt*, and *Abimelech* King of *Gerar*, having taken *Sarah* to themſelves, and intending to marry her, not knowing that ſhe was already Wife to *Abraham*, both

both returned her to him immediately, when once they understood her Relation to him; taxing him withal, for not having let them know it sooner, *Why didst thou not tell us she was thy Wife, and hast brought upon us and upon our People a great Sin?* The like Account is also to be met with in the twenty sixth Chapter of *Genesis*. And it is an ancient Tradition of the *Jews*, That amongst the Laws delivered by God to *Noah* after the Flood, and in him to all Mankind, one was against the Abuse of Marriage by this grievous Sin.

If we pass on to the Law of *Moses*, this will afford us divers Observations very pertinent to the Matter in hand.

1. God expressly forbids Adultery in the Decalogue. In this Law which contains the most inviolable Rules of Justice, and which the Almighty published on Mount *Sinai*, with Thunder and Lightenings, one Commandment is, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery*. And this Crime is put in the Divine Law in the same rank with Idolatry, Murder, and Theft.

2. Amongst the Laws which God afterwards delivered by *Moses* for the Explication of the Decalogue, there are several relating to Marriage and Adultery, which were particularly design'd to prevent the Commission of this Sin.

3. God who is a just Judge, and assigns to each Sin a Penalty proportion'd to the Heinousness of its Guilt, has decreed Adulterers, whether Men or Women, to be put to death. *Levit.* 20. 10. and *Deut.* 22. 22. *The Adulterer and the Adulteress shall be put to death.*

4. But this is not all. For seeing this Sin may be committed secretly, God thought fit to order a Method for the Discovery of it; so that a Woman suspected could not escape Death, if really guilty; I mean *the Waters of* † *Jealousy*. If the † Numb. 5. 11. &c.

Man had entertain'd a Suſpicion of his Wife, he was to bring her to the Prieſt, before whom ſhe was to ſtand with her Head uncovered, and with the Offering of Memorial in her Hand, and to drink of the bitter Water, which he was to give her to that end; ſaying to her at the ſame time, *If no Man hath lien with thee, and if thou haſt not gone aſide by Uncleanneſs to another inſtead of thy Huſband, be thou free from this bitter Water that cauſeth the Curſe; but if thou art guilty,* (then he cauſed an Oath to be adminiſtred to the Woman, full of Imprecations againſt her ſelf) *the Lord make thee a Curſe and an Oath among thy People, when the Lord doth make thy Thigh to rot, and thy Belly to ſwell.* Whereto ſhe was to anſwer, *Amen, Amen.* There were Ceremonies to be obſerved in her taking theſe Waters; and the Effect they produc'd, if the Woman was faulty, was, that ſhe would immediately ſwell and die.

5. Another Law ſhewing the Heinouſneſs of Adultery, and how inviolable and ſacred the Rights of Marriage are, as likewiſe in what Purity all ought to live even before they enter upon that State, is that which orders ſuch as ſhould fall into Uncleanneſs, after they are once eſpouſed, to be treated as Adultereſſes. *Deut.* 22.23, 24; That they with the Partners in their Sin ſhould be puniſhed with Death, and the People ſhould ſtone them.

It would be too tedious an Undertaking, to recite here all the Laws, the Threatnings, the Reprehenſions, and the Examples to this purpoſe that are to be met with in the Old Teſtament. I ſhall only take notice, that Adultery is one of thoſe Sins the Prophets ſo ſeverely reprove the *Jews* for. They commonly join it with Idolatry, and ſay their City *Jeruſalem* and their People ſhould be deſtroy'd becauſe of the Adulteries that were committed in the midſt of them. In the Cenſures which

which *Jeremiah* paſſed upon the *Jews*, he inſiſted upon their Idolatries, their Perjuries, their Murders, and particularly their Adulteries, as a Proof of their abominable Hypocriſy, and a Preſage of their Deſtruction. Jer. 7. 9. *Will ye ſteal, murder, and commit Adultery, and ſwear falſly?* &c. And in the twenty ninth Chapter of the ſame Prophet, he foretels both King and People ſhould be carried Captives to *Babylon*, *Becauſe they had committed Villany in Iſrael, and had committed Adultery with their Neighbours Wives*, ver. 23. The like Reproofs and Menaces are alſo to be met with in the fifth Chapter of this Prophet *Jeremiah*, and in the reſt of the Prophets.

IV. As to the New Teſtament, I ſhall not give a particular Account of what Paſſages are to be found there concerning Adultery, becauſe I have already mention'd moſt of them in the Chapter immediately foregoing. We ſee this Sin condemned moſt expreſly and by Name, St. *Mar.* vii. 21. 1 *Cor.* vi. 10. *Gal.* v. 19. and above all *Heb.* xiii. 4. *God ſhall judge the Whoremongers and Adulterers.* St. *Paul*'s manner of Speech concerning the Laws and Rights of Marriage in the firſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, Ch. vii. is likewiſe very full to our purpoſe.

And hereto alſo agrees the Notion which the Ancient Primitive Chriſtians had of Adultery. By whom this Sin was looked upon as of a moſt provoking nature; and they therefore proceeded with the utmoſt Severity againſt ſuch as were found guilty of it. It was one of thoſe three egregious Crimes, againſt which the Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline was exerciſed in its utmoſt Rigour; the other two being Idolatry and Murder. Whence Offenders in this kind were uſed to be kept under Excommunication for many Years together; and there was a Time, when they were not to be reſtor'd

ſtor'd to the Peace of the Church, till at the Point of Death. St. *Cyprian* teſtifies † that there were ſome Churches where Abſolution was never granted them. And though perhaps this might be an over-rigorous Courſe with them, nevertheleſs we ſee by it, what a mighty Abhorrence the firſt Chriſtians had of Adultery. And accordingly the Practice of it was very rarely to be heard of amongſt them. They could then boldly plead for themſelves againſt their Pagan Adverſaries, * That *they committed neither Murder nor Adultery, and indeed had not known there were any ſuch Crimes committed in the World, had they not obſerved how cuſtomary they were amongſt theſe ſame Pagans.* And even the better and juſter ſort of the Pagans themſelves, could not but own the Purity of the Chriſtians both Religion and Manners, and bear teſtimony to them, That *they engaged themſelves by a ſolemn Oath, neither to be guilty of Adultery, nor any other Crime.* As is plainly to be ſeen in that noted Letter ‖ which the younger *Pliny* wrote to the Emperor *Trajan.*

However after ſome time the Caſe began to alter. The Dread of this Crime abated; the Diſcipline relaxed; and thoſe Abominations which the Goſpel had given a great check to, not only gained at length an Admittance, but became frequent amongſt its Profeſſors; and is ſtill unhappily too prevalent with them, to the great Diſhonour of our moſt holy Religion.

Wherefore having thus ſeen what the Goſpel of our Lord, what *Moſes*'s Law, what Nature, and

† *Ep. ad Anton.* Et quidem apud Anteceſſores noſtros quidam de Epiſcopis iſtinc in Provinciâ noſtrâ, dandam Pacem Mœchis non putaverunt, & in totum Pœnitentiæ locum contra Adulteria clauſerunt.

* *Min. Fel. Octav.*

‖ *Plin. l.* 10. *Ep.* 97.

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what the very Heathens have taught concerning Adultery, I ask what Sentiment we ought all to have of this Sin and those that commit it? And whether a Man must not have renounced all Religion and even Natural Justice, before he can deliver himself up to a Crime so infamous as this?

Thus I have shewn that Uncleanness is a Sin, whether it proceed to the grosser Act of Adultery, or terminate only in Fornication. I shall not in this place insist upon those other Crimes into which Uncleanness is apt to draw Persons, such as Incest, and those terrible Enormities which Modesty forbids to name; and which Almighty God has formerly thought fit to punish with Fire from Heaven. These are such monstrous Impieties, as one can hardly tell how to mention. And all the Reflection I shall make upon them, is that of St. *Paul* upon a like Occasion, *Rom.* i. which yet ought to strike all those with a Fit of Trembling, who suffer themselves to be enslaved to the infamous Lusts of Impurity; namely, that when People are possessed with these Passions, there is nothing so foul as they will not be ready to venture upon; they lose all Sense of Shame, and involve themselves in all manner of Licentiousness. God in his just Judgment gives up all such as thus forsake Him, to the Desires of their own Hearts, till they arrive at the most intolerable Abominations. And their Sensuality is too apt to entice them to such Enormities as Human Nature recoils at, and seems scarce capable of yielding to. Of which yet we have too plain Examples in the *Sodomites* and the ancient *Canaanites*. And we have all therefore very good reason, seriously and with a hearty Concern for our own Welfare, to consider these Examples and those dreadful Excesses, whereinto Sensuality casts People headlong, when once they

they give themſelves up to it. And this Conſideration ought to have a powerful Influence upon us, to keep us within the Bounds of our Duty, and to engage us to be continually upon our Guard againſt all Uncleanneſs, as a moſt dangerous Luſt, and moſt earneſtly to be avoided.

CHAP. VII.

Of the other Species of Uncleanneſs.

ADultery and Fornication are not all the Sins into which People are betray'd by Uncleanneſs; but there are other Species of it beſides theſe two. There are a great Number of Perſons, who are no way chargeable with theſe groſs Sins, whoſe horrid Guilt I have been hitherto relating, who yet cannot clear themſelves from the Charge of being Senſual, Impure, and Slaves to the inordinate Motions of the Fleſh. And forasmuch as the greater Part of theſe are not apprehenſive of the dangerous Condition they are in; nay, oftentimes on the contrary, take themſelves to be innocent, or at leaſt not to have incurred any conſiderable Guilt, it is but fit they ſhould be diſabuſed, and made more ſenſible how the Caſe is with them. This therefore is what I am next to apply my ſelf to; and I beſeech all that ſhall read what I here offer to their Conſideration, ſeriouſly to attend to it, and impartially to examine and try themſelves by it.

I ſay then, there are other Species of Impurity beſides thoſe hitherto treated of. And theſe may properly be reduced to three Heads, impure Actions, impure Words, and impure Thoughts.

I. There

I. There are many Actions contrary to Modeſty and Chaſtity; ſome whereof by the Violence of the Paſſion, and the full Conſent of the Will, or by reaſon of the Malignity and Infamy of the Action, almoſt equal the Crime to which they tend. For ſome unchaſt Perſons are hurried on by their Luſt, to try in every thing to gratify their brutal Paſſion, as far as they can contrive to do it without committing the Fact. But here I muſt be very wary, and leave to my Readers the Trouble of conſidering with themſelves what I may not ſay, and applying to all the Actions of Impurity, what I may but juſt touch upon very briefly, and only in general Terms. Amongſt theſe Actions contrary to Purity are to be reckoned all thoſe Deeds, and whatſoever Inſtances of Behaviour, that are uncivil and too free; ſuch as immodeſt Touches, and laſcivious Geſtures. Hitherto alſo is to be reduced Indecency and Immodeſty of Apparel, as well as too familiar Converſe betwixt thoſe of different Sexes. Under each of which Articles there are divers Particulars to be treated of, but that I ſhall have a more proper Occaſion of doing it, when they ſhall hereafter fall in our way.

Now foraſmuch as I cannot well repeat all thoſe Actions which are hurtful to Purity, and yet my Readers may be doubtful of ſome of them, and may queſtion whether this or that be unlawful, I ſhall lay down this one general Rule in this place, whereby theſe Doubts may be eaſily reſolved. Let natural Chaſtity and Modeſty be firſt conſulted; becauſe provided a Habit of Wickedneſs has not quite extinguiſh'd in us the Senſe of Modeſty which is natural to us as Men, we ſhall readily diſcern, whether an Action be unchaſt, or no. Next this Principle is to be attended to; That a Chriſtian is bound to ſhun whatever ſenſualizes the Soul,

Soul, whatever tends only to satisfy the Passions, and whatever is wont to excite them either in our selves or others. And again, Enquiry should be made what is necessary, or at least is expresly allow'd. I say then, that whensoever we are ashamed of what we do, and dare not venture upon it in the sight of others; when it is only the Effect of a disorderly Passion, and aims only at indulging Sensuality, and kindling impure Desires either in our own or others Hearts; and when moreover it is neither necessary nor expresly allow'd; we should be sure to abstain from it.

If this Rule be thought not to be clear enough, and each one has yet his Scruples remaining, and cannot well satisfy himself, whether an Action be contrary to Purity, or be not; behold another Direction which leaves no Difficulty remaining. In all doubtful Cases, and when the Conscience is yet unsatisfy'd, the safer side is constantly to be chosen, which is not to yield to our Passion. There is never any Danger in taking this Course, though there be a great deal on the other hand, or rather though it be always sinful to do † what one doubts of, and cannot satisfy himself whether it be permitted, or whether it be forbidden.

Moreover it is easy to discern that impure Actions are forbidden for two Reasons. *First*, Be-

† *This must be understood of things perfectly in our own Power, and where no Command of our Superiours intervenes. For where Authority has commanded our Obeaience, this Command must over-rule our Doubts. As the Judicious Bishop* Sanderson *has clearly shewn, in his fourth Sermon* ad Clerum, *Sect.* 27, 28, 29, 30, 31. *And the present Lord Archbishop of* York, *in the second Part of his* Discourse of Conscience. *And Dr.* Calamy, *Of a* Scrupulous Conscience, *p.* 35, *&c. Nor indeed will it hold in all Cases, not over-ruled by any Command of Authority. As is solidly argued in the foresaid second Part of the* Discourse of Conscience, *p.* 16, &c.

cause

cauſe they are a likely Means of carrying Men on to the groſſer Crime. People don't ordinarily arrive at the Heighth of Wickedneſs all at once, but by certain Steps and Degrees. They begin with what they think lawful; they accuſtom themſelves to violate the Rules of Chaſtity in ſuch Inſtances as they perſuade themſelves can have no great hurt in them. But then from theſe leſſer Offences, they proceed to others, whoſe Wickedneſs they cannot but be ſenſible of; and ſo at length they fall into the more horrid Crime. But in the ſecond place, though we ſhould never come thus far, and our unchaſt Actions ſhould never puſh us on to the utmoſt Licentiouſneſs, they however defile the Soul; they increaſe the Inclination to Uncleanneſs, and withdraw from God. As a very little Obſervation will inform thoſe who allow themſelves in theſe ſort of Liberties.

To impure Actions may be ſubjoin'd ſuch Looks as are contrary to Chaſtity, inaſmuch as a Man may be guilty alſo of Sin in this reſpect, whether in beholding ſuch Objects, or in reading ſuch Books, as may be apt to beget unlawful Deſires. It is an undoubted Truth, that impure Paſſions are chiefly raiſed and enflamed by the Sight, and that it is impoſſible to continue chaſt, without a diligent Care to govern the Eyes, and to turn them away from whatſoever might ſeduce the Heart. Let but any one enquire into the Objects and Writings I am ſpeaking of, and the Impreſſions they are apt to make upon the Mind, and this will preſently convince him of the Evil and Danger of ſuffering his Eyes to dwell upon them. Theſe Objects pollute the Imagination, filling it with luſtful Thoughts; and it is only through the Temptation of Senſuality, that any can fix their Eyes upon them, or take any manner of Pleaſure in them. The Holy Scriptures ſufficiently caution againſt

againſt theſe undue Liberties. It was by the Sight that *David* was enticed to commit Iniquity. And *Job* who lived at a time when Moral Chaſtity was leſs known than it has been ſince, had yet learned that the principal Duty of Chaſtity was to regulate the Sight; as he declares, *Chap.* xxxi. 1. *I made a Covenant with mine Eyes; why ſhould I then look upon a Maid?* And no Chriſtian can deny the Neceſſity of this Duty, after what our Bleſſed Lord has ſaid, St. *Matth.* v. 28. *Whoſoever looketh upon a Woman to luſt after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his Heart.* Agreeably hereto the Character alſo St. *Peter* gives of thoſe carnal Chriſtians, againſt whom he wrote, was that *they had Eyes full of Idolatry*, 2 St. *Peter* ii. 14. The Sum is, That it is an infallible Sign of an unchaſt Perſon, to delight in fixing the Sight upon ſuch Objects as promote Impurity. As I ſhall have occaſion to obſerve again in the Sequel of this Diſcourſe; and eſpecially with regard to laſcivious Books.

This likewiſe I muſt add, That if it be ſinful to behold tempting Objects, it muſt be no leſs ſo to preſent ſuch Objects to others. Upon which account thoſe are highly to blame, who cloath not themſelves with Shamefac'dneſs and Sobriety, and do not cover themſelves as Chriſtian Modeſty requires. They hereby become an Occaſion of the Fall and Offence of others, and expoſe themſelves to that dreadful Vengeance, which our Saviour *Chriſt* pronounces againſt thoſe *by whom the Offence cometh.* For the ſame Reaſon unchaſt Pictures, obſcene and laſcivious Draughts and Repreſentations, are to be utterly baniſhed from among Chriſtians, as juſt matter of Infamy and Danger. Which ſhews to what a diſmal Ebb Chriſtianity is now come; of which there needs no clearer Evidence than the Diſſoluteneſs in Habits and Pictures that is ſo commonly to be obſerved. The Pagans had

had impure Paintings and Repreſentations; and it was an Effect of their Depravation, and an unhappy Fruit of their Religion, whoſe Worſhip, and whoſe Gods in a ſort authoriz'd and encourag'd it. And this was one Cauſe why the Primitive Chriſtians had ſuch an Averſion to all Painting and Sculpture, which yet are inoffenſive Arts, provided they be not abuſed to bad purpoſes. The Dread they had of Idolatry inſpired them with this Opinion; and they were much confirmed in it, by the Immodeſty and Laſciviouſneſs of ſeveral Pictures and Statues they had met with amongſt the Heathens. Like to which none were ever ſeen in Chriſtians Houſes, during the firſt Ages of the Church; howſoever it is a ſad Truth, that they are now grown ſo common, and the Abuſe in this reſpect ſo ſhameful, that a great part of the Profeſſors of our moſt holy Religion ſcarce ſeem to differ from thoſe Idolaters.

II. The Second Species of Impurity is that of Words. And with what a degree of Guilt theſe are chargeable, may eaſily be known, if we but a little reflect upon the Cauſe from whence they proceed, and the Effect they produce.

As to the former of theſe, our Bleſſed Saviour has taught us, that *out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth ſpeaketh*, St. *Matth.* xii. 34. Which though ſpoken in general Terms is fitly applicable to immodeſt Words; which cannot come from other than an impure Heart, and a Perſon almoſt entirely void of Shame. As it is Impurity to Think and Do things contrary to Chaſtity, ſo it is no leſs to Speak them. Inordinate Thoughts and Actions without doubt are criminal, though a Man may contain his Thoughts within his own Breaſt, may conceal his Actions, and may be very reſerved in his Diſcourſe; but if he come to that paſs, as to give a free vent to his Thoughts, and

to hold immodeſt Diſcourſe, and talk lewdly and diſſolutely, this ſhews him to have a very corrupt Heart, and betrays a Stock of Impudence as well as of Impurity.

On the other ſide, impure and laſcivious Diſcourſe is apt to produce moſt miſchievous Effects, both in the Speaker and the Hearers, and is a great Temptation to the fouler Crime. The Liberty of Speech too many allow themſelves, and the Cuſtom they indulge themſelves in, of ſaying, and hearkening to what is contrary to Purity and Chaſtity, is very deſtructive of Modeſty and Virtue. There is no paſſing thoſe Limits which Modeſty and Decency preſcribe, but Perſons quickly grow to be no longer upon the Reſerve, and take daily more and more Liberty, and the Abhorrence they had of Uncleanneſs wears off, their Vice becomes familiar to them, and they accuſtom themſelves to look upon it, without any Veil or Covering.

Unclean Diſcourſe is ſo evidently deſtructive of Virtue and Natural Modeſty, that the very Heathens could ſay, A Virtuous Man ought never to ſpeak what is uneaſy to chaſt and modeſt Ears; that an Obſcene Word is contrary to Virtue, and diſreputable to the Speaker; and that Diſſolute Diſcourſe is to be abhor'd, as well as the Actions themſelves *. But Chriſtians have more expreſs Rules and Precepts for their Direction herein.

† Eph. 4. 29. † *Let no corrupt Communication proceed out of your Mouth, but that which is good to the uſe of Edifying, that it may miniſter Grace unto the Hearers.* || Eph. 5. 3, 4. || *But Fornication, and all Uncleanneſs, let it not be once named amongſt you, as becometh Saints; neither Filthineſs, nor fooliſh Talking, nor Jeſting, which are not convenient,* or becoming your Profeſſion. See here an abſo-

* Plutarch. *Of Hearing the Poets.*

late

lute Prohibition, but withal in very general Terms; to let us know how reſerved, and how circumſpect Chriſtians ought to be, that they ſpeak nothing which does not well conſiſt with Modeſty and Decency. But eſpecially it is to be obſerv'd, how the Apoſtle condemns, not only all groſs Obſcenity, and ſuch filthy laſcivious Expreſſions, as one of any meaſure of Virtue would be aſham'd to utter; but in general all Diſcourſe that borders upon Impurity, and any way implies it. He forbids even all light and vain Talk, all Buffoonery, and Scurrility, as not becoming Chriſtians, and which ſuit not with the Holineſs of their Profeſſion.

So that were but People well convinced, and duly mindful of theſe Doctrines, this muſt neceſſarily work a Reformation in their Diſcourſe and Converſation, and make them much more obſervant and cautious how they ſpeak, that they never utter an unchaſt Expreſſion, or that tends to Impurity. It would cauſe them to abſtain from many things, which according to the Liberty that is uſually taken are now looked upon as innocent. For Example; They would not then be ſo ready to entertain each other with wanton Songs, and ſoft and effeminate Airs, and Language, upon the Subject of Love, which corrupt the Hearts of Youth more than Perſons are aware of; though few are wont to take notice of it.

III. The Third Species of Impurity is of the Thoughts. And it is no difficult matter to ſhew that impure Thoughts are ſinful. Whoſoever conſults St. *Matthew's* Goſpel, muſt needs ſee how expreſly our Bleſſed Saviour affirms, || that *Whoſoever looketh on a Woman to luſt after her, commits Adultery with her in his Heart*, and by conſequence becomes culpable in the ſight of God by theſe Thoughts and Deſires. So our Saviour at another time

|| Ch. 5. 28.

† St. Mar. 7. 23. teaches, † that thoſe *Evil Deſires which proceed from within, out of the Heart, defile the Man.* And his * 2 Cor. 7. 1. Apoſtle St. *Paul* exhorts * to *Purify our ſelves from* † Coloſ. 3. 5. *all Filthineſs both of Fleſh and Spirit;* and to † *Renounce not only the Sin of Uncleanneſs, but all unclean Deſires.* In a word, this is the Purport and Intent of all thoſe Precepts which require to govern our Deſires, and ſubdue our Carnal Inclinations. Though beſides theſe there are two other Conſiderations which clearly prove it our Duty, to attend to and regulate our Thoughts, as well as our Words and Actions.

One is, That the Thoughts are the Source and Original from whence our other Sins take their Riſe. Now it is an unconteſted Principle, that whatever cauſes Sin, is to be avoided. And ſeeing irregular Deſires are the Spring of ſinful Actions, laſcivious Glances, and unchaſt Words; it is therefore every one's Duty watchfully to reſiſt theſe Thoughts and Deſires, and to uſe our utmoſt Diligence for preventing as much as in us lies, their thruſting themſelves into our Minds.

The other Conſideration is, That ſuppoſing theſe inward Motions and Inclinations of our Heart, do not carry us on to the Crime it ſelf, and paſs no farther than the bare Deſire, they will not yet fail to pollute the Soul, and breed in us contrary Diſpoſitions to what our Religion requires of us. A Man is not properly defiled by any thing that does not come from within the Heart. But the Deſires and Motions of the Soul may be ſinful, though they reſt there only, and never put the Body upon Action. It is in the Intention, the Deſire, and the Will, that Sin chiefly has its being. Thus Covetouſneſs conſiſts in the Love and Deſire of Riches; and Pride in the Love of Glory and Honour. And in like manner Uncleanneſs conſiſts in the Love of Senſuality and

and carnal Pleaſures. And as a Man may be Covetous or Proud without ever actually poſſeſſing the Goods or the Glory he is ſo fond of, ſo he may no leſs be Unclean without arriving at the very Crime. That which pollutes the Soul, and renders it guilty and miſerable, is its Eſtrangement from God; and this is the infallible Effect of impure Thoughts. Theſe extinguiſh Piety, Fervency in Prayer, and a Deſire of the heavenly Treaſure; and ſtupify and ſenſualize the Soul; and ſo much the more, by how much the more eaſily this Paſſion gets the Poſſeſſion of the Heart, and employs the Phancy, and the Imagination, and ſuffers not the Thoughts to dwell upon other Objects, nor leaves any reliſh of whatever other ſort of Pleaſures.

And Oh that People would be perſuaded ſeriouſly and attentively to conſider this with themſelves! The Generality of Men conclude themſelves innocent, ſo long as they cannot charge themſelves with the Crimes of Uncleanneſs, thinking it enough, if they can ſay for themſelves, *I am no Adulterer, nor Fornicator.* But alas! ſuch ought to know that Perſons may be free of theſe Crimes, and yet may be highly blameable in the Sight of God. Nor is this all; for it is not impoſſible that one who has actually committed the Crime, may yet be really leſs culpable, than another who has never committed it. God forbid that I ſhould pretend to flatter Sinners, or go about to extenuate the great Guilt of any that deliver themſelves up to the Sin of Uncleanneſs; But neither may I flatter others, who though they have never been guilty of the Crime, live however in a Habit of this Paſſion; but muſt deal plainly with them, muſt ſhew them their Caſe as it is, and muſt put them in mind of the Sinfulneſs and Danger of the ſtate they are in.

Let us therefore ſuppoſe a Man to have fallen into this Sin of Uncleanneſs, drawn into it by ſome violent Exceſs of Paſſion, but who immediately recovers himſelf after his Fall, bewails his Miſcarriage, and makes the beſt Reparation in his Power, by a true Repentance and Holineſs of Life. Let us ſuppoſe on the other hand, a Man innocent of the Crime, but who, this excepted, allows himſelf in all ſort of Impurities, has polluted both Body and Heart by a hundred ſhameful Actions, by forbidden Looks, and dangerous Readings; a Man whoſe Eyes are always wandring, and his Soul is wrought upon and captivated by every tempting Object, his Heart, and his Imagination full of luſtful Thoughts and Conceptions; who cheriſhes his Paſſions, and delights in them; and in whom they are habitually ſettl'd and confirm'd. Now I would ask, Whether is the more impure and the more guilty of theſe two? I do not in the leaſt excuſe the Crime, but it cannot poſſibly be denied, that the latter is in the worſe Condition, howſoever he may paſs for innocent amongſt Men, and the other may be look'd upon as a heinous Offender.

But to make the Matter yet more plain, let us examine into it a little more narrowly. Thou ſayſt thou haſt not committed the Crime; but tell me, What is it has hindred thee? It could not be the Fear of God, becauſe this would no leſs have engaged thee to regulate thy Deſires, and keep thy Heart pure. It muſt therefore have been, either the Want of a fit Opportunity, or ſome other Conſiderations, ſuch as the Fear of Men, a Dread of Shame, and other ill Conſequents the Crime might have expos'd thee too. The Truth is, thy Will has been entirely bent this way, thy Heart has been filled with filthy and ſhameful Deſires, to which thou haſt chearfully re-

reſign'd thy ſelf. Wherefore flatter not thyſelf upon this account; but remember rather that impure Thoughts and Deſires are Sins, and poſſibly may prove very great ones.

To proceed: There are divers Species and divers Degrees of impure Thoughts, between which we are neceſſarily to diſtinguiſh. And to this end Enquiry is to be made, how, and by what Steps a Man falls into Sin. And ſo we ſhall find that, whether it be from the Activity of own Imagination, or from the Impreſſion outward Objects make upon us, there firſt ariſe ſuch Thoughts and Inclinations in our Souls as pleaſe and improve our Paſſions. Which unleſs we carefully reſiſt upon their firſt Riſe, the Favour we have for them will be continually gaining upon us, till at length we come to take delight in them, willingly admit them, give our Phancy free Liberty to entertain it ſelf with them, and let them fix themſelves in our Minds. By which means they grow more powerful, and we find our ſelves more and more eaſy towards them, and ſo they preſently produce Deſires, it being natural to deſire what we find pleaſes us. Sometimes theſe are wandring Deſires, not apply'd to any particular Object. But at othertimes they grow into a formed Deſign, and a Reſolution and deliberate Choice. After which there wants only a convenient Opportunity for conſummating the Crime. Theſe are the Steps and Degrees of our Paſſions; and by this Method of Procedure it is that they come to get the Aſcendant over us; and this oftentimes with ſuch Readineſs, and ſo ſpeedily, that we are ſcarce ſenſible of it. Now each of theſe Degrees has its Guilt, though not all equally. From our firſt beginning not to reject theſe Thoughts, but rather give them Entertainment, the Soul begins to be defiled; though when they grow up into De-

Deſires, it is much more ſo. And if in a while they obtain the full Conſent of the Will, the Temptation then has done its buſineſs; and though the Man ſhould not dare to venture upon the Crime, either for want of Opportunity, or becauſe he is afraid to expoſe himſelf, he is nevertheleſs to look upon himſelf as chargeable with it before God. And it is properly with reſpect to this Species of Luſt, that our Saviour tells us,

† St. Matt. 5. 28. † *Whoſoever looketh upon a Woman to luſt after her, has committed Adultery with her already in his Heart.*

Having thus diſcourſed of impure Thoughts, I think my ſelf concern'd, before I quit this Subject, to take notice, that there are alſo an involuntary ſort of Thoughts that thruſt themſelves into the Mind, and may ſeem contrary to Purity, whilſt in reality they are not, and which do no harm to this Vertue, nor any way defile the Soul. Such are certain fooliſh, whimſical, extravagant Thoughts, which at firſt appearance ſeem lewd and deteſtable, and perhaps very wicked; which ariſe either from the ſimple Imagination, or from ſomething read, or heard, or ſeen; or from a melancholick Diſorder in the Temperature of the Body; as many find by Experience. It is not unuſual to be too often interrupted and tormented with theſe Thoughts, even in our moſt ſerious Retirements, and in the midſt of our Devotions. Inſomuch that ſome have upon Conſideration hereof, been caſt into Fits of Deſpair and the blackeſt Melancholy; concluding that theſe being the Devil's Temptations, themſelves muſt certainly be under the Power of this Enemy to God and Man. And this ſad Eſtate of theirs is render'd yet more ſad and dreadful, by their own Backwardneſs, their Shame, or Fear, to diſcover it to any elſe, becauſe they apprehend it to be ſuch as had never before been ſeen or heard of. Yet this is too com-

common, and the Number of theſe poor Souls is far greater than People ordinarily imagine it to be.

Wherefore we muſt remember, that theſe ſort of Thoughts are not to be accounted amongſt thoſe impure Thoughts I have been diſcourſing of. They are but what the Minds of the Beſt are liable to, and ought not therefore to put others into too great a Concern. And even the more ſtrange and abominable they appear, the leſs reaſon have we to be affrighted at them. For there is no Sinfulneſs in any thing, but what has a Tendency to Evil, and is ſome way Voluntary. But the Thoughts I am ſpeaking of are not ſuch Temptations as invite to the commiſſion of Sin; nor have they at all the Aſſent of the Will.

On the contrary, thoſe who complain of them, are ſo far from conſenting to them, that they abhor them, and beg and pray to be deliver'd from them. They may juſtly be reputed an Effect of human Frailty, and the Diſorder of our Nature; but it is a groſs Miſtake to rank them amongſt our Sins. There is more Evil in one Fit of Anger, or Unclean Deſire, than in all theſe Thoughts, how frightful and how deteſtable ſoever they appear. And the beſt way therefore to get rid of them is to deſpiſe them, and not trouble ourſelves about them. Some are of Opinion that they are to be oppoſed and reſiſted, and ſet themſelves heartily to ſhake them off, and beg pardon for them of God, and are never at eaſe becauſe of them. But it were a much wiſer Courſe, not to be uneaſy at them, nor ſet our ſelves too reſolutely to contend with them; becauſe the more we ſtudy to prevent them, the more we ſhall find them return upon us. And all that many have got by oppoſing them, is only that they have hereby fallen into a miſerable Condition. Theſe Thoughts

Thoughts are not of that Conſequence that I ſhould have eſteem'd them worth mentioning, but only for the ſake of ſuch as are wont to torment themſelves about them. And what I have ſaid is ſaid not only with relation to thoſe Thoughts which are contrary to Purity, but in general, and of all others, as well as theſe, and even of thoſe that ariſe againſt the Divinity, and againſt our Faith. But this I poſitively aver, That what I have ſaid has no relation to ſuch Thoughts as proceed from a corrupt and profane Heart, and a Principle of Impurity and Libertiniſm.

Thus I have done with what I deſigned to propoſe concerning the Sins of Fornication and Adultery, together with the other Species of Impurity.

SECTION

SECTION II.

Of the Effects of Uncleanneſs.

AFTER what has been ſaid it cannot be doubted whether Uncleanneſs be a great Sin, and carefully to be avoided by all that call themſelves Chriſtians. But yet to make us the more ſenſible of the Evil of it, it will be requiſite to conſider its ill Effects in three reſpects; namely with relation to the State whereinto Men are brought by it, with regard to the Sins that accompany it, and in reference to the Miſchiefs that follow upon it. A ſerious Conſideration of which three Articles, will give us a full Proſpect of the Heinouſneſs and the Danger of this Sin.

CHAP. I.

Of the State to which People are brought by Uncleanneſs.

THE Eſtate to which People are brought by Uncleanneſs is ſo exceedingly deplorable, that I perſuade my ſelf, had but Perſons a right Notion of it, they would be much more afraid of giving way to it. And for this Cauſe I ſhall ſet myſelf in the next place to give ſome account of this State. But here I muſt premiſe, that what I am about to ſay, is not calculated for all ſorts of Unclean Perſons. Some being more deeply involv'd in this Sin, and others leſs, it muſt be con-

confeſſed they are not all equally Partakers of the ill Conſequents of it. And I muſt therefore beſeech each one to apply what I ſay to his own Soul, ſo far only as he finds himſelf concern'd in it, and ſees he has need of it.

Now this State to which People are reduc'd by Impurity, may be conſider'd theſe two ways, *Firſt*, With reſpect to the Purity of the Soul; and, *Secondly*, with reſpect to the Peace of their own Conſciences.

I. And it is plain the State of one given to Uncleanneſs, is a State of Pollution, Sin, and Miſery. True Piety requires to keep the Body and the Heart pure; but the Unclean are defiled both in Body and Soul, ſometimes by the Crime it ſelf, and ſometimes by other Actions contrary to Purity. Their Senſuality by being the Occaſion of abundance of inordinate Inclinations in them, hurries them on to many Inſtances of Lewdneſs for ſatisfying this brutiſh Paſſion. But the State of the Soul is chiefly to be conſider'd, whilſt it is ordinarily poſſeſt by luſtful Thoughts and Deſires. The unchaſt Perſon has his Mind rarely free from laſcivious and ſhameful Imaginations and Phancies. His Heart is a continual Spring of evil Thoughts bubbling up in it every moment; ſo that there needs only the Preſence of an Object to inflame his Deſire. Let him but ſee or hear any thing relating to his beloved Sin, and his Luſt is preſently kindled by it. And not only ſo, but at othertimes when none of theſe Objects preſent themſelves, his Memory ſerves to furniſh him with ſuch former Paſſages as had gratified his Senſuality; theſe he recalls to his Mind, and pleaſes himſelf with the Thoughts of them, inſtead of reflecting upon them, as he ought, with Sorrow of Heart and Confuſion of Face.

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This Paſſion has no ſooner got the Maſtery over the Heart, but forthwith it purſues the Man every where, and keeps its Poſſeſſion of him at all times and in all places. Upon the moſt ſerious Occaſions, and in the very Acts of Religion, he ever and anon finds himſelf tranſported with luſtful Conceptions and Deſires, which inceſſantly follow him and take up his Thoughts. I ſhall not need to ſay how great a part of Mankind find their Minds flag, and languiſh, and wander from their Buſineſs, and are full even of wicked Thoughts, when they ſhould be praying to God, or hearkening to his Word. But it is certain that in many of them Impurity is the Cauſe of this Diſorder. A Soul that is not Chaſt, will not know how to be Devout. To ſuch an one the holy Exerciſes of Prayer, Meditation, Reading, *&c.* appear inſipid and unpleaſant. A Love of Voluptuouſneſs is inconſiſtent with Spiritual Delights, and thoſe pious Affections, and Joys, and Raptures, which accompany a ſincere Holineſs of Converſation.

It is undoubtedly a dreadful Caſe to be thus miſerably deprived of the Love and Grace of God, and not allowed to enjoy any Communion with him. And it was not therefore without very good reaſon that St. *Paul* ſaid, by Uncleanneſs we ceaſe to be Members of Chriſt, and Temples of the Holy Ghoſt. The luſtful Man cuts himſelf off from Communion with our Saviour and the Bleſſed Spirit, and defaces the Image of God that had been formed in himſelf, and bears that of the Unclean Spirit.

Which is a Condition unworthy not only of a Chriſtian, but even of a Man. God has given to Mankind Modeſty and Reaſon as a Check to their Paſſions; but Senſuality and Luſt extinguiſh both theſe Endowments, and render Men like the brute

brute Beaſts, which follow their own impetuous Inclinations, without any manner of Reſerve. Theſe ſenſual Paſſions diveſt them of their Judgment and Underſtanding; according to that of the Prophet *Hoſea*, Chap. iv. 11. *Whoredom and Wine take away the Heart.* This is ſadly verefied in the looſer Sett of Men, who through their Luſts are become a ſort of Brutes, whoſe Character is Folly, and who ſenſeleſly caſt themſelves upon a thouſand Evils. Of all the Paſſions perhaps there is not one, that ſo wretchedly blinds the Eyes, as this does where it is indulged. For alas! What is it that ſuch who are tranſported with an immoderate Deſire and unchaſt Love, will ſtick at? Either they don't take notice of the great number of Evils, whereto they expoſe themſelves, or if they do, are nevertheleſs reſolved to venture upon them. They will attempt Impoſſibilities for the Gratification of their Luſt, will dare to be made wretched Vagabonds, will ſquander away their Eſtates, will forfeit their Honours, will diſgrace their Families, and bring upon themſelves inevitable Miſery, in ſpight of all that can be ſaid or done to the contrary. And ſtill ſo much the more lamentable is their Caſe, by how much the harder it is to reclaim them, when once they are throughly habituated to their Impurity. Whilſt their Inclination grows daily ſtronger and ſtronger, their Diſpoſition to Good is naturally and inevitably impair'd, and their Vice becomes ſo fixed that nothing can root it out. Or if any imagine that Age will wear it off, beſides what I have to offer hereafter againſt this, I muſt at preſent obſerve that it is not always ſo, but there are Multitudes of aged Sinners, who burn with this impure Fire, and whoſe Age does not at all render them either the Wiſer, or the more Chaſt.

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II. Next we are to consider the Unclean Person's Estate with respect to the Peace of his own Conscience. And so we shall find him always Uneasy, or which is worse, given up to a Hardness of Heart.

1. A Purity of Soul is necessarily required in order to Peace of Mind; the contrary Disposition naturally breeds Trouble and Disquiet. That Tranquillity and Satisfaction which the innocent Soul enjoys, belongs not to them who are transported with sensual and lustful Desires.

The Impure, especially those who are guilty of the Crime, are in continual Fear of Men, lest their Wickedness come to be discovered; they dread those that are privy to it, and so have it in their power to make it known; they distrust all others; and even their ownselves. Nor is it any strange thing for guilty Persons to betray themselves, and discover their own Crimes, either through Inconsideration, or in their Sleep, or in a Fit of Raving, or some other way.

But supposing them to be in no apprehension from Man, but that they are able to conceal their Miscarriages from all that are about them, they cannot hide them from their own Consciences, nor avoid being reproached by them; but will at every turn be struck with a Sense of the dreadful Condition they are in, and fear and tremble because of it. It is often seen, from time to time, and even in the midst of their forbidden Pleasures, that the Delight they take in satisfying their Lusts, is attended with Bitterness and cruel Remorse. The vilest Sensualist cannot forbear thinking sometimes, that he must die and be bereaft of these Objects of his Passion. It is true these Reflexions oftentimes pass away like Lightning, and the Man contrives some Method of lulling them asleep, and delivering himself from the Disturbance of them,

them, at leaſt for a while; but then it frequently happens, that they return and fill him with Confuſion; as particularly in the time of Sickneſs, or at the Hour of Death. Then Conſcience is terribly awaken'd, the Miſcarriages of Men's Lives come then into their Minds, and inexpreſſible Conſternation takes hold of them.

2. But the Unclean Perſon is not always in ſuch Perplexity, but ſometimes is deliver'd up to a State of Security, and Hardneſs of Heart. And this Hardneſs is twofold. For as there are two things in Sin, the Sin itſelf, or the Fault committed, and the Puniſhment conſequent upon it; ſo are there two ſorts of Hardneſs; the one when the Sinner is not affected with a Senſe of his Wickedneſs, the other when he regards not the Puniſhment of it.

1. The impure Perſon very often has either no Senſe at all of his Sin, or at leaſt, but a very weak and feeble one. This has happen'd to ſome of the groſſeſt Offenders, whoſe Security, after ſo many Provocations, has been very wonderful. There are ſuch whoſe Conſcience might reaſonably be expected to be to them a Hell upon Earth, conſidering how their Life has been little elſe than a continu'd Series of Incontinence, Pollution, and Uncleanneſs; their Youth has been entirely ſenſual, their Practices ſince have been very ſhameful, and they have given themſelves up to their inordinate Paſſions of the Fleſh; and yet they live at Eaſe, and in Mirth and Jollity. Now it is poſſible they may be much more ſo in Appearance, than they are in Reality, ſince none can look into their Hearts to ſee how they ſtand affected there. Yet it muſt be owned they are ſometimes inſenſible of their Condition, and ſo are at Eaſe within themſelves, and feel none of that Remorſe and Dread I am ſpeaking of. And this is eſpecially the

the Caſe of thoſe who have long habituated themſelves to love their Sin, and deſpiſe the Admonitions of Conſcience; till by degrees they come to be no longer reſtrained by any Scruples, or any inward Remorſe, and can ſin boldly and without Fear; much like thoſe luſtful and licentious Pagans, of whom St. *Paul* ſpeaks, *Who being paſt feeling, had given themſelves over to Laſciviouſneſs, to work all Uncleanneſs with greedineſs, and whom God gave up to their own vile Affections.* In truth it ſeemed hard that thoſe to whom the Goſpel has been preached, ſhould ever arrive at ſuch a height of Inſenſibility and Stupidity. Yet there are Profeſſors of our Religion, who in this reſpect fall very little ſhort of the Pagans. There are unhappy Chriſtians, who have in a manner loſt all Senſe of Religion, and all Notions of Virtue, and are even ready to undertake the Defence of their Impieties.

2. But that we may the better apprehend to what a meaſure of Security ſome of theſe Sinners may attain, it is farther to be obſerved, That as they are not ſenſible of their Sin, ſo neither are they oftentimes of the Puniſhment of it; ſuch Puniſhment I mean as befals them by reaſon of it, in this preſent Life. Sometimes one may perceive the Judgments of God hanging over the Heads of the Unchaſt, and threatning to fall upon them; ſometimes actually and viſibly purſuing them, in their own Perſons, or in their Relations, or their Affairs in the World, making them groan under the Miſeries, Sorrows, and divers Evils they have brought upon themſelves; and yet we may ſee how little Senſe they have of the Reaſon why theſe ſad Afflictions are laid upon them, and how ready they are to attribute their Misfortunes to any other Cauſe rather than to themſelves; ſome of them continuing in their Security, till the Judgment of

God ſeizes them, and they die in their Impenitence. Which is the moſt deplorable, and moſt dangerous State a Man can fall into. For ſo long as the Sinner has a Senſe of his Guilt, and the Vengeance juſtly due to him for it, there is ſome hope of him; but when he is come to this degree of Obduracy, there is very little to be expected from him, for he is then upon the very Brink of Miſery, and but one Step from everlaſting Deſtruction.

But methinks I hear ſome plead, That it is not the Fate of all Unclean Perſons to be thus harden'd in their Wickedneſs, but that ſome of them repent and are converted, that their Sins may be blotted out. And this is what I willingly own. But then, beſides that there is ſome reaſon to queſtion whether all that ſeem to be reclaim'd, are really and truly ſo, as I ſhall ſhew hereafter; beſides this I ſay, I anſwer, that all who are Unclean do not thus repent; and every one therefore ſhould dread the indulging himſelf in this Luſt, leſt ſo he fall into a State of Impenitence, as he has too apparent Reaſon to expect he ſhall. His ſinning Wilfully, and ſearching for Evaſions whereby to encourage himſelf in his Sin, and to perſuade himſelf he incurs no great Danger by it, is the natural and moſt likely Means of Security.

Yet beſides this I have ſomething more to add, which very well deſerves to be conſider'd, and will farther evidence how exceedingly dreadful that State is to which Perſons reduce themſelves by Impurity. For admitting that thoſe who have committed this Sin, or at leaſt who are addicted to Uncleanneſs, though they have not actually committed it, do riſe again by Repentance, their Caſe however is very ſad and uncomfortable upon theſe two Accounts.

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1. The Impreſſion that has been made upon them by their luſtful and carnal Inclinations will for a long time after expoſe them to Temptation and the Danger of returning to their former evil Courſes. Habits of Sin are not extirpated all at once, eſpecially ſuch as are attended with ſenſual Pleaſure and Delight. There is more Difficulty than Men are ordinarily aware of, in correcting a vicious Temper and Diſpoſition, and checking the Motions which naturally ariſe either in Body or Soul, after a long Cuſtom of ſinning. It is not near ſo eaſy as People phancy to diſengage themſelves of thoſe Sins, which are almoſt inſeparably fix'd in their Imaginations, and gratify their Senſitive Faculties, and with the Thoughts of which they are wont to pleaſe themſelves. The Repreſentation and Remembrance of theſe Luſts continues for a long time, ſtill polluting the Soul, inſtead of working in them a hearty Sorrow and true Repentance. What miſerable Wretches then muſt they be, who have ſpent perhaps the greateſt part of their Life in theſe impure Paſſions, and have not yet got the Maſtery over their Senſes, nor learn'd to mortify their Bodies by a long and ſincere Repentance!

2. But this is not all. For though they ſhould be able to ſurmount theſe Inconveniences, they muſt yet expect to have their Conſcience reprove them as long as they live. Though the truly penitent Sinner may aſſure himſelf of obtaining the Pardon of his Sins, he will always bear about him a Remembrance of them, which will exceedingly afflict him, and cover him with Confuſion. And ſo much the more nearly will theſe Reflections affect him, by how much the more Penitent he is. Oh, What Sorrow and Anguiſh of Mind muſt it cauſe in him, to look back upon the time wherein he had forſaken his God, and bethink himſelf of

the Extravagance and Licentiouſneſs of his younger Days, and all the Sins he has either committed himſelf, or has occaſion'd others to commit! Not to add any thing here of his Doubts concerning the Nature and Validity of his Repentance, whether it be ſincere and effectual, and ſuch as is required in order to the Forgiveneſs ~~his~~ of paſt Tranſgreſſions.

The natural Reſult of which Conſiderations is, That the Eſtate to which Perſons reduce themſelves by this Sin, is very diſconſolate and afflicting. And this will farther appear, if we proceed to conſider the ſeveral other Sins wherewith it is accompanied.

CHAP. II.

Of the Sins which accompany Uncleanneſs.

THIS Conſideration that Uncleanneſs is one of thoſe Sins which never go alone, but have a Train of others perpetually attending them, is of great Uſe for proving the Heinouſneſs of this Vice. And this I come now to treat of, chiefly with reſpect to thoſe that are guilty of the Crime; but ſo as that all who are impure in any other manner, or have an Inclination to Impurity, may juſtly apply it ſeriouſly to themſelves.

Now the Sins which here fall under our Conſideration, as accompanying Impurity, are of two ſorts. Some of which precede the Crime, and others enſue upon it.

I. It is certain, in the firſt place, that People do not uſually fall into this Crime, without being chargeable with certain other previous Tranſgreſſions of their Duty. This is true of the generality

lity of Unclean Perſons, and there are very few Exceptions to it to be met with.

1. Uncleanneſs almoſt always ſprings from Ignorance, Idleneſs, Irreligion, and Senſuality; thoſe who pollute themſelves by this infamous Sin, or ſet their Hearts upon the Luſts of the Fleſh, being for the moſt part, ſuch as for want of a good Education and Inſtruction in their Childhood, have little Underſtanding in Matters of Religion; or elſe are Profane and Libertines; or have but little Senſe of Piety and the Fear of God, and are very looſe in the whole Tenor of their Converſation, and live in the Neglect of Prayer and the other Exerciſes of Devotion; or are Idle, Lazy, Senſual, and Lovers of Pleaſures. Theſe are the Qualities which involve People, and eſpecially in the Heat of Youth, in Uncleanneſs, as ſhall be fully proved, when I come to enquire into the Sources of this Sin.

2. But there are other Sins likewiſe which precede this whereof I am now ſpeaking; ſuch as impure Thoughts and Deſires, immodeſt Paſſions and Inclinations, an unreſerved and blameable Familiarity, unchaſt Looks, Actions, and Diſcourſe; and in a Word all that this Paſſion ordinarily produces in them who are under its Influence. Whereto let it be added, That for the Satisfaction of this brutal Paſſion, a thouſand unlawful Contrivances are made uſe of, Solicitations, artful Inſinuations, Lyes, Proteſtations, and even Oaths for the Confirmation of their Promiſes, which yet they at length take liberty to violate. Sometimes they venture to commit great and grievous Crimes, for facilitating their way to the accompliſhment of their Deſigns, and getting rid of ſuch Perſons as might otherwiſe be an Obſtruction to them. They will not ſtick to ſacrifice their Wealth, their Reputation, and all that

is dear to them, not excepting their Religion and their Conſcience, to this infamous Paſſion. Thus they paſs through Diverſity of other Sins before they arrive at what they principally aimed at. Before they come to be Fornicators or Adulterers, they are firſt Profane and Impious, their Bodies and their Souls are defiled and infected, and they have parted with their Chaſtity, and their Religion; ſo that the Crime is only an Addition of certain Degrees to that Impurity which they had before contracted.

What I have here ſaid particularly affects two ſorts of Perſons, it being plain from hence that, 1. Many who have never yet dared to commit the Crime, are not however to look upon themſelves as innocent; becauſe they are highly culpable in giving way to thoſe Sins which lead to the Crime, howſoever they have not yet ventured upon the Crime it ſelf. 2. Thoſe who have unhappily fallen into the Crime ought to be ſenſible that they are much more blameable than poſſibly they take themſelves to be, and that their Sin of Uncleanneſs is not all they are chargeable with, but they have many others to anſwer for, which render them very criminal before God. Let them therefore call to mind what has preceded their Fall, let them recollect the manner of their paſt Behaviour, and what it was that brought them to this Crime, let them examine their Life, and their Conſcience, with relation to the other Duties of Religion, and they will find themſelves to have been perfect Strangers to Godlineſs, and that their Converſation has been little elſe than one continu'd Series of Indevotion and Licentiouſneſs. If all that are guilty would weigh this well with themſelves, they would have quite a different Notion of their Sin; eſpecially if hereto they ſubjoin the Conſideration of thoſe other Iniquities that are the moſt common Effects of it.

II. For

II. For the Truth is, there are divers ſorts of Sins conſequent upon Uncleanneſs.

1. Thoſe who are guilty of it, at leaſt a great part of them, continue in the Commiſſion of the ſame Crimes. The Difficulty of this Sin ſhews it ſelf chiefly in the beginning, and when the firſt Step is taken, they thenceforward ſin more boldly, and are leſs upon their guard againſt it. On the one hand, their Paſſion gets head, and their luſtful Inclinations grow more prevalent; and on the other, Modeſty and the Fear of God wear off. At firſt they ſin with ſome Reluctancy, and they find for ſometime a Struggle within themſelves; but when once they have paſſed their known Bounds, they are little concerned for whatever they do afterwards. Having begun to enter upon a ſinful Familiarity, they ordinarily proceed accordingly, perſevering in their Sin as long as they are able, unleſs they meet with ſome Impediment to prevent it; and yet then they only divert their Paſſion to ſome other Object.

2. They not only continue in this Sin, but proceed to groſſer Inſtances of it. From one Fault they go on to another, and according as the Number of their Sins increaſes, they are proportionably greater and more enormous. Incontinence has it in its Power to caſt Men headlong into the utmoſt Exceſs; it is a bottomleſs Gulph, that never can be filled; a Fire that kindles and burns more violently according to the Quantity of Fuel that is heaped upon it. And hence the Debauchee being tranſported by his own brutiſh Paſſions, ſets himſelf to find out new Methods of ſatisfying his Luſt, and when he has found them, ſoon grows weary of theſe too, and is as much at a loſs for others, which yet in a while pleaſe him no better than the former. It fares with him as with the Drunkard, who when Cuſtom of Drinking has

render'd his Wine ſo familiar to him that he thinks it not ſtrong enough, ſeeks out for other Liquors, and not long after as much deſpiſes theſe. Fornication paves the way to Adultery, and ſometimes to what is more flagitious. This gives birth to thoſe horrible Crimes which are not fit to be named, which brought Deſtruction upon *Sodom*, and its neighbouring Cities, and provoked Almighty God to exterminate the *Canaanites*; as St. *Paul* ſpeaks *Rom.* i. 21. 24. where he tells us of the Heathens, that *having their fooliſh Hearts darkened, God alſo gave them up to Uncleanneſs, through the Luſts of their own Hearts, to diſhonour their own Bodies between themſelves.* When we reflect upon the Abominations of theſe Heathens, and of the ancient *Canaanites*, and read the Laws which the Almighty ſaw fit to give the People of *Iſrael* upon this account, and which are contained in the eighteenth Chapter of *Leviticus*, and moreover obſerve the execrable Abominations that are yet committed, not only amongſt the Infidels, but amongſt ſuch as call themſelves Chriſtians, and in Countries that have naturally an Abhorrence of ſuch beaſtly Luſts, it is wonderful to think that Perſons endu'd with Reaſon, and who moreover make Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, ſhould be capable of ſuch horrible Impieties. However this lets us ſee to what Exceſſes Men are carried by their Luſts, and what are the Conſequences of Impurity.

3. Beſides theſe dreadful Inſtances of Incontinence, Impurity makes way for divers other Sins; it being ordinary to endeavour the concealing of this Sin by the Commiſſion of new ones of other kinds. Thus *David* became guilty of Murder, in hope to prevent the Diſcovery of his Adultery, by treacherouſly contriving the Death of his faithful Subject *Uriah*. I cannot here take notice of all the Courſes Unclean Perſons reſort to, to the

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end their Vices may never come to the Knowledge of the World, ſome of them being too horrid to be mention'd. They deſtroy their own Infants ſometimes before, and ſometimes after their Birth. Or if theſe Infants, the Fruits of their Impurity, don't loſe their Lives, they are uſually caſt off; and thoſe who have brought them into the World, mind not how they are diſpos'd of, their only Care being to get rid of them; nor are they concern'd for what becomes either of their Bodies, or of their Souls. Which is one of the moſt crying Sins they can poſſibly be guilty of, a Sin whoſe Enormity cannot be ſufficiently expreſſed; and yet with which vaſt Numbers of Perſons, eſpecially of the Men, load their Conſciences.

4. Uncleanneſs is very frequently followed by Tricking and Unfaithfulneſs. Nothing is more common with ſuch as practice it, than to make uſe of Promiſes and Oaths in order to effecting their lewd Deſigns, and afterwards to break theſe Oaths and Promiſes, and ſo to become guilty of Perjury and Perfidiouſneſs. I will not take occaſion here to ſay any thing of the crying Acts of Injuſtice that are done to, and the Diſturbances that happen in Families, by means of Adultery, becauſe I have already touched upon them in the foregoing Chapters.

5. The Crimes in which Unclean Perſons involve themſelves upon the Diſcovery of their Wickedneſs come next to be conſidered; that inſtead of confeſſing their Guilt, they deny it, they lye, and this with the moſt ſolemn Proteſtations and Oaths. They ſeek to juſtify themſelves by the moſt indirect Means; and in thoſe places where the Laws condemn and puniſh Impurity, they ſtudy by Trick, and Artifice, and all ſort of undue Evaſions to elude the Force of the Laws and the Strictneſs of Diſcipline. They are ordinarily avowed

avowed Enemies to all Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline and Order; and ſet up with all their might for a Liberty to live as they pleaſe; and whereſoever they are able they will not fail to compaſs ſuch their Deſign. And for this reaſon it is that the Laws which were made againſt this Vice have been abrogated in many places, or at leaſt are grown into Diſuſe.

6. Uncleanneſs, if perſiſted in, gradually ſtifles all Senſe of Religion and Conſcience. Of which King *Salomon* was a famous Example, whoſe ſtrange Wives prevailed upon him to forſake his God, and ſerve the Idols of the Nations round about him. And now in our own days it is ordinarily to be obſerved, that Perſons ſacrifice their Religion to this brutiſh Paſſion, changing their Church or Party, purely for the gratifying their ſenſual Deſires. Oftentimes they grow profeſſed Libertines and Abetters of Impiety, and ſo add Impudence and Shameleſneſs to their Impurity, and ſcoff at Religion, and undertake to defend their Crime. Becauſe they find themſelves condemn'd by the Doctrines of Religion, and that it were happy for them if they had no Judgment to undergo after this Life, they make it their buſineſs to perſwade themſelves, that they need fear nothing of this nature. They call the moſt undoubted Truths into queſtion, and diligently ſearch for, and greedily entertain whatever may ſerve to confirm them in theſe wicked Principles. They are taken with thoſe ſenſeleſs Evaſions wherewith the Atheiſts and bold Wits ſet themſelves to oppoſe the Doctrines of Religion. Any Appearance of Difficulty, either in relation to ſome Paſſages of the ſacred Hiſtory, or as to the Difference that is between Good and Evil, paſſes with them for an unanſwerable Argument, and is a Reaſon for their turning Atheiſts, at leaſt as far as they are able.

7. It

7. It is peculiarly to be noted, that Offenders in this kind do not ſin alone, but involve others in the ſame Guilt with themſelves. For whether they be the Tempters, or the Tempted, they are in either Caſe accountable for the Danger incurred not only by themſelves, but likewiſe by the Partners in their Wickedneſs; ſince we are all equally obliged, as not to ſeduce our Neighbours, ſo neither to ſuffer our ſelves to be ſeduced by them, but on the other hand to endeavour, as much as in us lies, to reclaim them from Sin. And yet the Unchaſt have another more direct and more pernicious way of promoting the Deſtruction of their Accomplices, by enticing them to cover their Guilt by ſtill more villainous Attempts; ſuch as expoſing their Children, murdering them, telling Lies, and making falſe Declarations and falſe Oaths. The laſt of which is a Crime of ſo dreadful a nature, that Perjury is not only one of the greateſt Sins any one can be drawn into, but thoſe who are guilty of it, ſeldom fail of perſiſting in it to their Death; and dying in it, muſt be inevitably ruined to all Eternity. And let who will be Judge that has any Senſe of Religion left in him, how heinous a Provocation it muſt be, to have been inſtrumental in order to the Damnation of another, it may be of many, and what a Load muſt lie upon the Conſciences of all ſuch. Though one of the Parties ſhould afterwards ſincerely repent of his Fault, and reſolve to make all the Reparation in his Power, he may however expect to be continually tormented with cruel Regret and Remorſe, and a conſtant Uneaſineſs for the Hazard of his Partner's Salvation; eſpecially where there is juſt ground to fear ſuch an one died in an impenitent ſtate.

8. And yet once more: The Loſs and Damnation of the Children born of theſe unlawful Mixtures

tures is yet to be conſider'd. For they are not only often ſent abroad to periſh by War, or in foreign Countries; but beſides, through want of Education, and by reaſon of their unhappy Circumſtances in other reſpects, they generally grow very lewd, and ſo ruine themſelves. The Sins of thoſe alſo are to be taken notice of in this place, who are prevailed with to aſſiſt theſe impure Perſons in either the Commiſſion or the Concealment of their Wickedneſs; as likewiſe are the Vices which creep into Families, where either of the Parents live in Uncleanneſs. For there Senſuality, Gluttony, Love of Pleaſures, Idleneſs, Sloth, Diviſions, Quarrels, Indevotion and Impiety are uſually very rampant. And as if this were not bad enough, an ill Management of the Family-Concerns, a bad Education, and as bad Example, too commonly tranſmit theſe Vices to Poſterity. The Children frequently tread in their Parents Steps, and by this means ruine themſelves, if not always, yet very commonly. To conclude, if to what is here ſaid, be added the Scandal theſe Wretches give, and the Miſchief they do, by their bad Lives, as well as by their looſe Diſcourſe, it muſt be owned that they are not only the Authors of their own Deſtruction, but that divers others alſo fall and periſh together with them.

Thus I have inſtanced in ſome of thoſe Crimes which are conſequent upon Impurity. Some of them I ſay, for a great deal more might be urged upon this Subject, that I have not meddled with. But from what has been ſaid, what Opinion ſhould every one have of a Sin, that draws ſo many others after it, and brings ſuch inevitable Deſtruction upon the Actors and Abetters of it? Theſe Reflexions ſhould raiſe in all an utter Abhorrence of ſo vile a Practice, but above all ſhould effectually engage ſuch as are already immerſed in it, to think

think ſeriouſly with themſelves, how they may ſpeedily get ſafe out of it. This is a very ſad and a very dangerous State, and whoſoever is at any time taken in its Snares, will find a hearty Repentance neceſſary in order to his Recovery out of them. I am ſenſible this Sin does not hurry all that allow themſelves in it, upon all the other Iniquities I have mentioned; the Effects of it not being always the ſame, but more fatal in ſome than they are in others. Yet it is not to be thought that any can indulge themſelves herein, without incurring the Guilt of ſeveral other Sins with it. It is each one's Buſineſs now after all to examine Himſelf in relation to what is here ſaid, and to ſee how far Himſelf may be concerned in it.

CHAP. III.

Of the Evils and Puniſhments conſequent upon Uncleanneſs.

I Come now to the Evils and Puniſhments conſequent upon Impurity. And theſe again, as the Sins that accompany it, are twofold. The Puniſhments which God inflicts upon it in this World, and thoſe that he reſerves for the other Life.

I. Almighty God has ſometimes puniſhed this Sin by extraordinary Judgments in this World, and with the moſt exemplary Severity of any mention'd in the whole ſacred Hiſtory. The Crimes of thoſe who inhabited the Old World, and were deſtroy'd by the Deluge, took their Riſe from the luſtful Inclinations of the Fleſh. *Moſes* tells us, *Gen.* vi. 2. *That the Sons of God ſaw the Daughters of Men that they were fair, and they took them Wives of all*

all which they choſe; and this introduced into the World that terrible Corruption of Manners, and thoſe notorious Crimes, which provoked Almighty God to deſtroy very near the whole Race of Mankind. Since the Deluge we have no more eminent Example of the Divine Vengeance upon a People, than the Overthrow of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, and the other Cities that were conſumed by Fire from Heaven, together with all their Inhabitants, and the whole Country round about. But it was the Licentiouſneſs and Senſuality of the People of this Country, which brought upon them theſe dreadful Effects of God's Indignation. After theſe we have it recorded of the *Iſraelites*, that they periſhed in the Wilderneſs †, to the number of Twenty and four thouſand Perſons, becauſe they had been drawn into Uncleanneſs and Idolatry, by the Daughters of *Moab*; an Example which St. *Paul* ſets before the *Corinthians* *, to affright them from theſe ſame Sins. All thoſe Examples are evident Proofs of the Deteſtation in which Almighty God has this Sin. In like manner St. *Peter* and St. *Jude* alledge them to ſhew that God did not fail to puniſh the Luſtful and Laſcivious. 2 St. *Pet.* ii. 4, *&c.* and St. *Jude* 7, 8.

† Numb. 25. 9.

* 1 Cor. 10. 6, 7, 8.

To theſe Examples of the Wrath of God againſt whole Nations, may be added thoſe Judgments which he has alſo executed upon particular Perſons. And it is obſerved of *David*, that after he fell into this Crime, many Misfortunes befel himſelf and his Family ||, as the Prophet *Nathan* had threaten'd; namely the Death of his Child, the tragick Events that enſu'd upon his Son *Ammon*'s Crime, and *Abſolom*'s Conſpiracy and Rebellion. The like might alſo be noted of his Son *Solomon*. After the Love of Women had drawn him aſide, the Divine Protection viſibly departed from him, as we ſee, 1 *Kings* 11.

|| 2 Sam. 12. 10.

Theſe

Theſe terrible Puniſhments, thus related in the Holy Scriptures, ſhew fully how God deteſts Impurity; without any neceſſity of his repeating in theſe Days the like Examples of his Indignation. Yet there are ordinary Judgments which are ſeen to light upon the Unchaſt. There are vaſt Numbers of Perſons and Families, who are unhappy, and ruin'd, whoſe Miſery cannot be reckoned other than an Effect of God's Vengeance againſt this Sin, puniſhing it with Shame, Grief, Poverty, and all ſort of Misfortunes. It is true theſe Evils are not the proper Puniſhments of this Sin; but rather to be eſteemed an Effect of the Goodneſs of God towards Men. They are only Chaſtiſements in order to the Reformation of Offenders, to make them ſenſible of their Sin, and careful to avoid the Torments of the Life to come. But they are withal moſt effectual Examples for teaching People not to indulge themſelves in Senſuality.

Which they cannot ordinarily do, without ſhaming and diſhonouring themſelves. Though it is true this is not the Caſe of all, and that this Puniſhment reaches none whoſe ill Conduct is not publickly taken notice of. There are many who conceal their Guilt, and ſo paſs amongſt Men for innocent. But yet Diſgrace and Shame rarely fail of being the Portion of the Diſſolute.

Moreover this Sin expoſes to Grief and Want; and many, though not every one, are puniſhed in this manner, ſo plainly that it is not eaſy to reflect upon their Sufferings without being forced to confeſs, that there is a particular Curſe of God hanging over this Crime. The Exceſſes of Incontinence leave behind them Sickneſſes and Infirmities, which naturally cauſe Sorrow and Shame, and which frequently accompany them even to the Grave. There is no Sin by which a Man is re-

reduc'd to ſuch a State, as they are reduc'd to who deliver themſelves up to this, nor that has the like terrible Effect upon the Body. So that even in this Senſe that of St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* vi. 18. may juſtly be applied, that *He who commits Fornication ſins againſt his own Body.* Almighty God who has made all things with the greateſt Wiſdom, has annexed divers Evils to the immoderate Uſe of bodily Pleaſures; and chiefly with this Deſign, that Impurity ſhould have ſuch terrible Conſequences, to the end they may lay a Reſtraint upon People, and not let them give way to a Paſſion that is exceeding prevalent with thoſe it gets the Poſſeſſion of. And again, beſides theſe great Evils, there are likewiſe divers Infirmities that are the Conſequents of Incontinence. Sobriety and Chaſtity preſerve the Health, and prolong the Life, above all other Methods; and then it muſt follow by the Rule of Contraries, that Laſciviouſneſs and Senſuality ſhorten the Days, and are the Occaſion of many Diſeaſes. The Cauſes of many Diſtempers are very hardly diſcover'd; nor can the moſt skilful Phyſician inform himſelf whence they have ariſen; which yet if the Truth were known, would appear to be the Effect of Impurity.

In like manner the Guilty of this Vice fall very often into Poverty and Miſery, as a Curſe naturally conſequent upon their Sin. There is no manner of Difficulty, in ſhewing how the Unchaſt impoveriſh themſelves; that they ordinarily ſacrifice all to their Paſſion, they contrive divers ways of ſquandering away their Eſtates; and particularly that a conſiderable Part goes for promoting their infamous Deſigns, and then again for concealing their Crime, and to prevent its taking air. They are great Prodigals as to what their Luſt demands for its Satisfaction; and are moſt commonly idle, dainty, effeminate, intemperate, proud, and Lo-

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yers of good Entertainment. As Sobriety and Faſting are good Preſervatives againſt Uncleanneſs, this Vice on the other hand has for its Companions Drunkenneſs and Gluttony. The Unclean are moreover negligent of their own Affairs, and if they have an Employment, will not be perſuaded to ſtick duly to it. By which means they cannot but waſt what they have, and bring themſelves and their Families into Straits; after this manner verifying the Saying of the Wiſeman, *Prov.* vi. 26. *By means of a whoriſh Woman a Man is brought to a piece of Bread*; and that of *Job*, xxxi. 12. *Luſt is a Fire that conſumeth to Deſtruction, and roots out all the Increaſe.* As the Son of *Syrach* alſo affirms, that *he that cleaveth to Harlots, ſhall have Moths and Worms to his Heritage*, Ecclus. xix. 3.

And ſtill there are more Miſchiefs to be born in the Families where this Vice reigns, that is to ſay, the Breach it makes betwixt Husband and Wife, and all the Misfortunes that neceſſarily follow upon ſuch a Breach. The ill Conduct of either Father or Mother is enough to put all into Confuſion. Nay, even the bare Suſpicion of either Party's being faulty, will cauſe incurable Diviſions in Families. Whence ariſes alſo another Evil not to be paſſed over in ſilence, and which deſerves to be look'd upon as a particular Curſe of God; I mean, that theſe Evils, Shame, Grief, Poverty, *&c.* don't terminate only in the guilty Perſons, but their Poſterity after them feel the ill Effects of them. Their Children are ſlighted, and ſickly, and poor, and miſerable, not for their own, but their Parents ſake. Thus whole Families are often ruin'd, and the Seed of the Adulterers falls almoſt always into Diſtreſs. I add farther, That the Children whoſe Fathers or Mothers are this way addicted, are for the moſt part prone to imitate them herein. Which comes to

paſs partly from a natural Reaſon, becauſe the Children partaking of the ſame Temper and Conſtitution with thoſe from whom under God they receiv'd their Being, will be influenc'd likewiſe by the ſame Paſſions; and partly by means of their bad Education, and the ill Examples they have conſtantly before their Eyes, it being impoſſible for them, whilſt in theſe Circumſtances, not to behold and obſerve many Paſſages which will be as a moſt dangerous Poyſon to them. They are bred up in Idleneſs and Intemperance, which brings them to Poverty, and that Poverty tempts them to I know not how many other Sins. Which Conſiderations ſhew plainly how the Unchaſt involve their Children, no leſs than themſelves, in Misfortunes of all kinds. And ſo we have ſeen one Part of the Evils which follow Uncleanneſs in this Life, and of which every Day furniſhes us with Examples.

II. And if theſe Evils hitherto inſiſted upon are evident Signs of the Divine Indignation againſt the Unchaſt, how ought they to ſtand in awe of thoſe other more inevitable, and more intolerable Puniſhments which are reſerved for the other Life. The Unclean are not always puniſhed in this World, but they will be moſt certainly in the other, unleſs they take care to prevent it by a timely and hearty Reformation. This the holy Scripture teaches as expreſly as may be. St. *Paul* profeſſes, as I have already noted, 1 *Cor.* vi. 9. 11. that *neither Fornicators, nor Adulterers, nor the Abominable, ſhall inherit the Kingdom of God*; cautioning alſo at the ſame time, that we don't abuſe ourſelves, nor flatter ourſelves in this reſpect. And the ſame Doctrine he repeats, *Gal.* v. 19, 20, 21. *I tell you before, as I have alſo told you in times paſt, that they who commit ſuch things ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* So *Epheſ.* v. 6. *Let no Man deceive*

you

you with vain Words; for becauſe of theſe things cometh the Wrath of God upon the Children of Diſobedience. In the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, Chap. xiii. 4. *God*, ſays the Apoſtle, *will judge the Fornicators and Adulterers.* And St. *Peter*, 2 Ep. Chap. ii. 9. declares and proves by many Examples, that *God reſerves the Wicked*, and chiefly the Carnal and Impure, *unto the Day of Judgment, to be puniſhed.* But I ſhall have another Occaſion to enlarge upon this Judgment, and theſe Puniſhments. What is already ſaid ſuffices to ſhew, that Impurity expoſes Men to the Miſeries of Damnation.

Theſe are the Conſequents of Uncleanneſs; this is that dreadful State to which it brings Men, and theſe the Sins into which it drives them, and the Puniſhments to which it renders them obnoxious. And one would think them enough to inſpire all Perſons with a Deteſtation of this Vice. I am ſure every one has reaſon to dread the Thoughts of falling into that Brutiſhneſs and Hardneſs of Heart, of which all are in great Danger, who at any time paſs the Bounds of Modeſty, and part with their Chaſtity. And all ſhould therefore ſeriouſly ſtudy, to prevent that Remorſe, which ſooner or later will be the Portion of the Laſcivious, and to keep at a Diſtance from a Sin that draws ſo many others after it, and in a Word, caſts its Slaves and Votaries into an Abyſs of Evils.

SECTION III.

Of the Causes of Uncleanness.

HERE I am to enquire whence it comes to pass that this Vice is so common. And in general it may be affirmed, that this is owing to Men's natural Inclinations, and the Passions which draw them into it. But now as Christians have Instructions and Motives for witholding them from Uncleanness, and our gracious God vouchsafes us the most efficacious Means, the most powerful Assistance, and the most proper Remedies, for enabling us to overcome our Passions, and this one in particular; so is it just matter of Admiration, how it comes to pass that they profit no more by these Advantages, and that Uncleanness reigns so exceedingly amongst us. This therefore is what I propound to my self to examine into in this Section.

CHAP. I.

The First Cause, Ignorance.

THE first Cause of the Prevalency of this Vice is Ignorance. St. *Paul* ascribed † the Extravagances of the Heathens, and particularly the Impurity of their Lives, to the Ignorance in which they lived. And the same is no less true of too great a part of those who profess themselves Christians; namely that they are not acquainted

† Eph. 4. 18, 19.

quainted with the Doctrines of Religion as they ought to be. And yet their Ignorance appears greater in relation to this Vice than others; and this poſſibly they are the leaſt caution'd againſt of all Sins. To keep People at a diſtance from any Sin, they ſhould be taught the Nature and the Heinouſneſs of it, and ſhould have ſet before their Eyes the Arguments and Reaſons there are for diſſwading from it, together with the moſt effectual Means of guarding themſelves againſt it. But theſe things have been too rarely inſiſted upon with relation to Uncleanneſs. So that People do not rightly underſtand wherein this Sin conſiſts; and therefore conclude themſelves innocent, if they have never been guilty of Fornication or Adultery. All thoſe other Species of Impurity, ſpoken of before, paſs with them for nothing, or as next to nothing; whether in their Actions, their Looks, their Deſires, or their Words, and how contrary ſoever to Chaſtity. And not knowing the Evil that is in theſe Courſes, they make no Scruple of them, and ſo become Slaves to this Paſſion, before they are aware of it.

Neither do they well know the Heinouſneſs and Conſequences of this Sin. For certainly had they a right Notion of theſe; did they truly lay before themſelves the Eſtate to which Men are reduced by it, the Sins into which it betrays them, the Misfortunes it brings upon them, and what is to be done for the Cure of it, they would become much more cautious, and not dare to take ſuch Liberty of gratifying their ſenſual Inclinations. The Goſpel ſets before us the moſt powerful Motives to Chaſtity, teaching that Almighty God has ſtrictly commanded it, that we are continually in his Preſence, and he ſees and obſerves our Behaviour at all times and in all places, that we have taken upon us the Profeſſion of a pure

and holy Religion, and have at our Baptism oblig'd our selves in the most solemn manner to live up to its Principles, that we must shortly die, and must come to Judgment for our Offences in this kind as well as all our other Iniquities, that there is an incomparable Reward, an immortal Crown of Glory to be lost by this Sin; and not only so, but eternal, everlasting Agonies in the bottomless Pit will be the undoubted Portion of those that persist in it. We are also directed to the most effectual Assistances and Means of subduing the Temptations of the Flesh, such as Prayer, Meditation, Watchfulness, Sobriety, Fasting, and Mortification, and the Grace of the Holy Spirit of God, which he is ready to vouchsafe to all that humbly beg it of him, and which oftentimes assists us even before we have sought for it. All which weighty Considerations duly impress'd upon Men's Minds by good Instruction, would not suffer them to abandon themselves to the Excesses of Sensuality, as now they do. But whilst so great a Part of Mankind are grossly ignorant of these Doctrines, it is the less to be wonder'd that Impurity is so prevalent as Experience sadly shews it to be.

Now if it be enquir'd how People come to be so ignorant of what so nearly concerns them, these two Causes of it may chiefly be assign'd.

1. The Negligence of those who ought to teach them better; and more especially of Parents, and those that are set over them in the Church. I shall presently consider the Case of Parents, and the Education of their Children. In the mean time my Business is to shew that those who are ordain'd in the Church for the Instruction of Christians, do not all take due care for their Information in this Point, and to set them at distance enough from Impurity. It is true they take occasion some-

ſometimes to ſpeak againſt it in their Sermons, and to condemn and diſſwade from the Practice of it; but then they ordinarily do it in too looſe and general Terms, and do not deſcend to Particulars, as would, at leaſt in ſome Caſes be proper, to make their Auditors underſtand what this Sin is, and how offenſive in the Sight of God, and what Courſe is to be taken for delivering them from, or recovering any of them out of it. Nor indeed are all of them qualified to treat of ſo nice and tender a Subject as this is, where without a ſolid Judgment and a great Meaſure of Prudence, it can hardly be but a Man will ſay either too much, or not enough.

2. In the ſecond place, where theſe vocal Inſtructions are wanting, it may be concluded that Recourſe ſhould be had to Books; but the Miſery is, that whoſoever ſeeks for relief this way, will find himſelf deceiv'd for want of a ſufficient Supply. There are very few Books adapted for People's Inſtruction in this Caſe. And I muſt confeſs it is ſomewhat ſtrange, that this being one of the moſt common Sins, there has yet been ſo little publiſh'd againſt it. I do not at all queſtion but the Reaſon why ſo little Pains has been taken this way, whether in the Pulpit, or by private Inſtruction, or by Writing, is becauſe of the ſhameful Nature of the Sin. Yet it is not impoſſible that People might without breach of Modeſty have been better taught concerning it, than they generally have been. Some certain Rules for avoiding it might have been preſcrib'd the younger ſort, whereby to beget in them a Niceneſs of Conſcience in relation to it; without deſcending to ſuch Particulars as it is not fit to mention to Perſons of their Age. And would but their Teachers apply themſelves ſeriouſly and diligently to this, they would not find their Endea-

yours unſucceſsful. Though for want of ſuch Application their People's Ignorance muſt inevitably be very great, and their Sin very common.

CHAP. II.

The Second Cauſe of Uncleanneſs, Bad Education.

A Second Cauſe of this Vice is a Want of good Education. Youth is a time in which Care ſhould be taken to caution againſt all Sins, but in an eſpecial manner againſt this. And ſo much the more are theſe Doctrines to be then inculcated, becauſe Children in the earlieſt part of their Life are guided only by Senſe; and that Inclination to Corporal Pleaſures, which is the great Temptation to this Vice, is then moſt prevalent in them.

Wherefore it is requiſite they ſhould be fortified againſt it by good Inſtruction in their tender Years, whereby to lay a Foundation for Religion and Virtue, and beget in them a mighty Veneration for Almighty God; and after this by a Care to ſee them well brought up, in great Temperance, a Plainneſs of Apparel, an Unacquaintedneſs with bodily Pleaſures, in Modeſty, and an Abhorrence, not only of whatever is apparently deſtructive of Chaſtity, but whatever has the leaſt Tendency towards Impurity. They ſhould be taught a great Reſervedneſs and Caution in their Diſcourſe, and not be ſuffer'd to read obſcene Books, or to talk wantonly, or any way that in the leaſt offends againſt Modeſty, and ſhould never have anything of this nature ſaid in their Hearing. For the bare Hearing and Repeating this ſort of Language impairs

pairs their Modeſty, and gradually wears it away, and this being once loſt, they no longer have any Guard upon themſelves.

Children and young People ſhould likewiſe be put upon labour, and accuſtom'd to take pains to bear with Wearineſs and other Inconveniences, to abſtain from Delights, and mortify themſelves, and follow thoſe Directions which Reaſon and Religion preſcribe for the Government of their Paſſions. It is not to be thought what account theſe Means will turn to, what great Influence the Doctrines of the Goſpel will have upon Children thus educated; and how much leſs ſuſceptible they will be of any inordinate Paſſions; how they will find the Diſpoſition of their Souls confirm'd and eſtabliſh'd, ſo as to contribute very highly to the Happineſs of their Life, and the Practice of Virtue.

But this is not now the Method of educating Children. It is ſeldom that Care is taken to inſtil the Principles of Religion into them, and in particular to train them up to Purity. Moſt Families are very regardleſs of their Children as to this part of their Duty, and more eſpecially at thoſe Years, when theſe Advertiſements are moſt needful for them. No Inſtructions are then given them for guarding them againſt Uncleanneſs; little regard is then had to their Conduct, but they are commonly left wholly to themſelves.

And yet what is much worſe than this. They are wont to be bred in ſuch a manner, as naturally inclines them to Senſuality and Luſt; ſo negligent are moſt Parents of their Children's Education, and ſo little regard have they to ſee them accuſtom'd to the ways of Virtue. The Peaſants, Artificers, Servants of both Sexes, and others of inferior Rank, have for the moſt part very weak and confus'd Apprehenſions of Piety and Religion,

gion, having been careleſly brought up, with no Senſe of any thing but what concerns the Body. And thoſe of better Condition are not much better taught; ſo that oftentimes their Eſtates and Advantages as to this Life ſerve only to make them the more vicious and ſenſual. They are taught to live effeminately, and to mind only the things of this World. They are ruin'd while young by Luxury and Gluttony, by minding their Dreſs too much, and feeding too high. And if any would be very obliging and kind to them, they have got an ill Cuſtom of doing it, by preſenting them with ſome ſort of Ornaments, or by inviting them to eat ſuch Meats as are not fit for them. By what they both hear and ſee they are made to imagine that it is Deſireable and Advantageous to wear fine Cloaths, and eat what is moſt pleaſing to their Taſt. This is what they are very ready to harken to, and what they are eaſily induced to comply with. And hence it unavoidably comes to paſs, that their Conſtitution is depraved, and they ſoon become Lovers of Pleaſures. It is infinitely dangerous therefore to encourage the Senſuality of young Perſons by ill Habits, of Delicacy, and Daintineſs in the Choice of Meats, or of Exceſs in Eating; this being the ready way to have them ſwallow down a deadly Poyſon in their tender Years, and render them ſenſual and intemperate all their Life after. But nothing is more pernicious than drinking Wine, which ſome even of the Pagans have thought unfit for thoſe who are under twenty Years of Age to drink. Yet now it is uſual in many Countries for Children and even for Girls to drink it unmixt. Theſe are viſible and neceſſary Cauſes of Impurity, and are therefore very unreaſonable and improper. For young Perſons are ſufficiently inclin'd to Pleaſures by the Heat of their Youth, and the Plenty and

and Briskneſs of their Spirits; ſo that there is no need of cheriſhing and promoting ſuch their Inclination, or of farther inflaming their Paſſions by a ſenſual Education.

Hereto may be added the Example which Children have ſet them, and the Diſcourſe they hear in the Families whereof they are a Part, the Management of moſt Parents being a matter of great Lamentation. Great Care ſhould be taken, and great Circumſpection uſed, in what is ſaid before Children; becauſe they are obſervant, and very apt to take notice, eſpecially of what comes from their Fathers and their Mothers. Wherefore nothing ſhould be ſaid where they are by, that has the leaſt Tincture of Impurity. And yet how many Fathers and Mothers have no regard to it; though they thereby diſcover themſelves very defective as to Chaſtity and Piety? They ſay any thing before their Children, tell immodeſt Stories, and uſe obſcene and indecent Expreſſions, and poſſibly ſuch as are remarkably ſo. Now ſuch would do very well to conſider whether any thing can more readily poiſon the Minds of Children than ſuch Carriage. It was *Plato*'s Saying, as is related by *Plutarch*, That Aged Perſons ſhould ſtudy above all things to ſhew their Modeſty in the Preſence of the Younger ſort; and that whenever they leave off to behave themſelves accordingly, it is impoſſible to inſtill Shame and Reverence into their Children.

To conclude, There are two Faults to be obſerv'd, which are committed in the Education of Children, which tend very much to the Corruption of their Morals, and render them leſs pure and virtuous. The former of which is committed when they are Little, and the other when they are come to ſome Bigneſs. Whilſt they are little, they have little Communication with Wiſemen; and

and their Parents not willing to have the Patience to talk with them, nor to leave their Affairs or their Pleaſures for them, put them into the hands of Maids or other Servants, from whom they can learn no Good, and by whom they are early corrupted, namely by Seeing and Hearing divers matters which are contrary to Virtue, and which teach them to know Vice, and to love it..

The other Fault I would mention is, That they are diſmiſs'd too young out of their Fathers Houſe, and are left to their own Government, whilſt they are not yet of Age to order themſelves, but yet are ſuſceptible of all ſorts of ill Impreſſions. From Sixteen to Nineteen or Twenty, is the moſt dangerous part of all our whole Lives, that being the time when Youth enters into the World, and their Paſſions grow unruly, and there is a great deal of hazard in beginning to taſt of Pleaſures. By no means therefore ſhould they be left to themſelves at this Age; and if for Reaſons taken from the manner of their Education they muſt be put out, all poſſible Care muſt be taken to commit them to the Inſpection of Wiſemen, who may watch narrowly over the Conduct of themſelves, and not let them go out of their Houſes, without having got them firſt well grounded in Religion. This is the great Duty of Fathers, and the greateſt Good they can do to their Children. This is of a very different Conſequence, from the other Cares that People are wont to take. And it is the moſt certain Method Parents can pitch upon, to promote their Children's Happineſs in this World, and to ſave themſelves a great deal of Expence, and a great deal of Uneaſineſs. The Neglect of which in Fathers, is the reaſon their Children thrive no better; but above all it is one of the Cauſes why they abandon themſelves to Impurity.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The Third Cauſe of Uncleanneſs, The Way of Living.

A Third Cauſe of this Vice is a heedleſs inconſiderate manner of Life, which muſt be rectified in many Particulars, before People will be able to perform their Duty aright, in this as well as other reſpects.

I. And in the firſt place Devotion is abſolutely neceſſary in order to a virtuous Converſation, and in an eſpecial manner, in order to Chaſtity. Humble and fervent Prayer is the Method Almighty God himſelf has preſcribed for obtaining Grace and the Holy Spirit of God. And thoſe pure and ſolid Pleaſures with which Devotion fills the Soul, are an admirable Defence againſt the moſt powerful Temptations of Voluptuouſneſs. But then it is only a ſmall part of Mankind that have attained to a true Senſe of Devotion, that are both conſtant and hearty in their Addreſſes to God, and do not neglect theſe as well as Reading, Meditation, Religious Diſcourſe, and other Inſtances of Piety; or that take any Delight in them. And what then can be expected, but that being no better guarded againſt the Temptations of the Fleſh, they ſhould be overpowered and captivated by them?

II. Idleneſs is a frequent Occaſion of People's falling into this Sin of Uncleanneſs. Buſineſs chaſes away evil Thoughts, by employing the Mind to better purpoſe, and by mortifying the Body, and conſequently the Paſſions. But whilſt any lead a careleſs unactive Life, they are neceſſarily

ſarily expoſed to Luſt, unleſs their natural Temper and Conſtitution happily prevent it. And when the Lazy, and thoſe that live without any Employment meet with theſe Temptations, they readily yield to them, their Idleneſs having before weaken'd them, and render'd them unfit to encounter any Attempts that are made upon them. Having never been accuſtom'd to overcome their own Appetites, or to offer Violence to themſelves in whatever Caſe, the leaſt Oppoſition they meet with proves too hard for them. This therefore is one Cauſe why the younger ſort are ſo eaſily led aſide by their Paſſions; they are not enough engaged in Buſineſs. And for this Reaſon it is that in thoſe Places where Perſons are not intent upon any kind of Work, and have nothing to do for Part of the Year, the Crimes of Uncleanneſs reign much more than where the People are held to continual Labour.

III. Intemperance alſo leads to Uncleanneſs, theſe being two Vices that ordinarily go together, and promote each other; as the Holy Scriptures inform us. The Apoſtle St. *Paul* notes † *that Wine leads to* * *Diſſoluteneſs and Exceſs.* And throughout the New Teſtament Drunkenneſs and Gluttony are almoſt always joined with Impurity; as I have obſerved before. Intemperance naturally begets Laſciviouſneſs, in that on the one hand it depraves the Conſtitution, and enflames the Blood and Spirits, and on the other, it takes away the free Uſe of Reaſon, or at leaſt it leaves Perſons no longer upon their Guard, makes them leſs modeſt, and gives them a certain Freedom and Boldneſs in both their Speech and their Behaviour, whence they eaſily and in a very little time proceed to a farther Liberty. So that whereas in a Wiſeman, and much more in a Chriſtian, the Body ſhould be in ſubjection to the Spirit, and Reaſon ſupported

† Eph. 5. 18.

* Ἀσωτία.

ported by Religion ſhould govern and ſuppreſs the Motions of the Fleſh; Intemperance ſubjects the Soul to the Body, and enfeebles Reaſon and Religion; and ſo ſubverts the natural Order of things, and plunges inevitably into Impurity. The Soul by this means becoming groſs and ſenſual, is render'd unfit for Watching and Prayer, and taſting any other Pleaſures, than thoſe of the Body, whoſe Slave it is.

What I here ſpeak of Intemperance concerns not thoſe only who have arrived at the more ſcandalous and ſhameful Exceſſes of Debauchery, who eat immoderately, and drink till they have perfectly loſt their Underſtanding; but thoſe likewiſe who without exceeding in the Quantity of what they either eat or drink, ſeek after Delicacies, and the choiceſt and moſt dainty Food; and in general, all that are not ſober and plain in their Diet, but ſet themſelves to pleaſe their Appetite. There is no being chaſt without living ſoberly, and accuſtoming ourſelves to deny the Body its Demands, and eſpecially as to Diet. When we have learn'd to govern ourſelves in eating and drinking, we ſhall quickly become Maſters of the Body and its Deſires. And ſo we ſee the Goſpel preſcribes Sobriety and Faſting as one of the principal Means of ſubduing the Body, and taming the Paſſions. But when we neglect ſuch Means we evidently run the hazard of ſinking under the Temptations of Impurity; and this Danger is continual, in regard that Food is of inevitable Neceſſity for the Body, and what it every day calls for. When any therefore inſtead of practiſing Abſtinence, ſtudy rather to ſatisfy their fleſhly Appetite, their Soul then falls an eaſy Prey to Temptations.

IV. Too much Care of the Body, and the Love of Pleaſures, is alſo another Step towards Luſt.

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One of the chief Doctrines of the Chriſtian Religion is not to be too favourable to the Body. And it is very certain that a Love of Pleaſures, is a Diſpoſition diametrically oppoſite to the Spirit of the Goſpel, which is a Spirit of Mortification, and Self-denial. *Make not Proviſion for the Fleſh, to fulfil the Luſts thereof,* was St. *Paul*'s Advice †. Our Bleſſed Saviour denounced * a dreadful Woe againſt them that live in Pleaſures upon the Earth, and think of nothing but Joy and Mirth. And his Apoſtle St. *James* || ſpeaks to the ſame Purpoſe. He that is enſlaved to his Senſes and Body, and whoſe Mind is ſet upon Pleaſures, treads very ſlipperily. This Inclination grows every Day more violent accordingly as it is attended to, till at length the Man has ſo habituated himſelf to it that he knows not how to get rid of it.

† Rom. 13. 14.

* St. Luke 6. 24, 25.

|| St. Ja. 5. 5.

Yet how dangerous ſoever this manner of Life be, it is nevertheleſs what too many love and are fond of; who inſtead of mortifying their Bodies, by denying them what they call for, yield it all moſt readily, and make it their conſtant ſtudy, and the main Aim and Deſign of their Endeavours, to comply with and gratify their Deſires. It is a Maxim own'd by many, not to croſs themſelves in any thing, but on the contrary to ſeek after all the Delights and Enjoyments of Life, in Eating, and Drinking, in Lodging, in Cloaths, and every thing elſe. There are abundance of People, eſpecially amongſt thoſe whoſe Quality and Eſtates diſtinguiſh them from their Neighbours, and oftentimes alſo amongſt thoſe of inferior Rank, who never think of any greater Happineſs than to waſt their Time in doing nothing, to be merry, and continually in Company, or at Play, or ſome other Diverſion. And in truth they know not how elſe to paſs their Time. They divide it therefore betwixt their Sleep, their Dreſſing and

Adorning

Adorning themſelves, their Meals and other Entertainments, their Viſits, Amuſements and Pleaſures; ſome or all of which engroſs it wholly. And this effeminate ſort of Life, which daily obtains more and more, deſtroys Chaſtity, beſides a vaſt number of other Evils, which it is the Cauſe of. And if they that indulge themſelves in it do not fall into the Exceſſes of Uncleanneſs, it muſt be either becauſe they have no natural Inclination this way, or becauſe ſome worldly Conſiderations withold them from it, it being hardly poſſible that the Hearts of ſuch ſhould not be taken up with the inordinate Luſts of the Fleſh. Delights corrupt, enervate, and weaken the Soul, and render the Man tender, and unable to reſiſt the Allurements of Voluptuouſneſs. The ſame I ſay of Dancings, Balls, Vain Shews, and all that may be called the Pomp of the World.

Let us now imagine a Man, ſuch as we ſee abundance are, whoſe Temper diſpoſing him to Senſuality, ſtands in need to be corrected by Abſtinence and Mortification; let us imagine this Man, I ſay, to take all the ways he can to inflame and heighten his Luſt, that he feeds high, declines all Labour, and loves his Pleaſures, and is ſo far from ſhunning what gratifies the Senſes, that it is his buſineſs to find it out; and who inſtead of Abſtinence and Mortification is for Good Chear, inſtead of Work for Idleneſs, inſtead of Watching for Sleep and Reſt, inſtead of due Auſterities for Luxury, inſtead of a ſimple plain way of Living for Pride and Delicacies; now I ſay it is as impoſſible for this Man to be chaſt, as for a Fire not to kindle by blowing, and a conſtant Addition of Fuel, Wood, or whatſoever combuſtible matter. God muſt work Miracles, or rather muſt deſtroy the Nature of Man, if he will have ſuch an one, whilſt he remains in this Eſtate, not to be addicted

to Impurity. Senſuality and the Love of Pleaſures have ever been the Ruine of Virtue, and particularly of Chaſtity. And it is always to be obſerved, that in thoſe Places where ſuch a ſoft, eaſy, and ſlothful Courſe of Life prevails, all both Men and Women loſe the Sentiments that properly belong to their Sex. The Men become effeminate; and the Women by little and little part with their Modeſty, and Baſhfulneſs, till they grow ſhameleſs and venture upon the ſame Extravagances, and the ſame Debaucheries as the Men. And this makes way for ſuch Enormities as I may not undertake to deſcribe.

It has been obſerved in all Ages how dangerous the Love of Pleaſures has proved, and it is at this time remarkable that where People live in Rioting, and Idleneſs, and Luxury, as is uſual in the Courts of moſt Princes, and in thoſe Countries where the Delights of Life abound, thoſe that dwell in theſe Places are almoſt all vicious and addicted to Luxury. The holy Scripture † propounds to us in this Caſe the Example of *Sodom*. The Country in which this City lay, was according to *Moſes*'s Relation, and that of ‖ *Joſephus*, one continual Garden, wherein grew great Plenty of Plants and the moſt delicious Fruits. The Advantages and Delicacies of this Country corrupted the Inhabitants; their Plenty produced amongſt them Idleneſs and Wantonneſs; their Affluence of good things made them voluptuous and effeminate, and puſh'd them on to the moſt terrible Extravagances. *Ezek. 16. 49. *The Sin of Sodom*, ſays *Ezekiel* *, *was Pride, Fulneſs of Bread, and abundance of Idleneſs*. And this Corruption grew at length to ſuch a height, that God reſolving not to bear any longer with this abominable People, executed upon them the dreadfulleſt

† Gen. 13.

‖ *Of the War of the Jews*, l. 4. c. 27.

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Vengeance that has ever been heard of. A terrible Evidence to what intolerable Abominations a Man may become obnoxious, when a Love of Pleaſures and Senſuality have got the Poſſeſſion of him. Theſe Paſſions are never to be ſatisfied, but grow more and more powerful by all the ways that are taken to pleaſe them, and never ſtop ſhort of the laſt Exceſſes whenſoever the Reins are let looſe to them. They are as a Torrent ſwelling every Day higher and higher, till it carry all away with it. Thus the Heart grows ſoft and tender, Modeſty and Chaſtity retire, and partly by Inclination, and partly out of Vanity and Point of Honour, People are drawn in to do as others do; and nothing leſs than ſome ſevere Calamity can ſtop the Courſe of theſe Impieties, and make Perſons bethink themſelves, and return to a better Mind.

V. Amongſt other Cauſes of Impurity Exceſs in Apparel muſt by no means be omitted. This ſort of Luxury is not only culpable as expreſly forbidden in the Goſpel, but upon ſeveral other Accounts which I may not inſiſt upon here. Wherefore not to treat of it otherwiſe than as it relates to Impurity, I ſay Perſons may offend in their Dreſs, either againſt Plainneſs, or againſt Modeſty; and both the one and the other of theſe Offences leads to Impurity.

1. A Love of Finery and Gaiety is a frequent Companion of this ſhameful Paſſion. *Salomon* repreſents the whoriſh Woman, as one † that is adorn'd, deck'd, and perfum'd. Unchaſt Perſons ſtudy to pleaſe; and thoſe that employ their time in Dreſſing themſelves to the beſt advantage, love to be looked upon when thus ſet forth; which may eaſily tend to beget impure Deſires, whether in themſelves, or thoſe who behold them. Their Vanity this way makes them love to ſhew themſelves,

† Prov. 7. 16, 17.

selves, and gives them free, open, and confident Airs, and thereby takes off from their Bashfulness and Modesty, which naturally inclines to a more reserved manner of Life, and a more prudent, stay'd, and graver Deportment. The third Chapter of *Isaiah* well deserves to be often read, as excellently suiting with this Argument. The Prophet there passes a long and severe Censure upon the Luxury and Pride of the Daughters of *Jerusalem*; but besides this he taxes them with want of Modesty and Shamefacedness; that they were *haughty, lifted up their Heads, and walked with stretched-forth Necks*, shewing apparent Tokens of their Immodesty by their Looks, their Gate, and their whole Carriage. Whence it is to be observ'd, that as a Love of fine Cloaths and other Ornaments prevails very much amongst the Female Sex, so is it apt to carry many of them very far; and there are too many of them, who will not stick wretchedly to expose themselves, even to the last degree, for the satisfying this Passion.

2. But this Vanity becomes more culpable and more dangerous, when it prevails to the prejudice of Modesty. One of the first Lessons we find in Scripture, was given in relation to Modesty and the Use of Apparel. *Moses* † teaches that Garments were given to Man after his Fall for a Covering; and accordingly Modesty and Decency require the Body to be cloathed. Which Rules are to be inviolably observed amongst Christians, seeing we make Profession of singular Purity; though they chiefly relate to the Female Sex. The Apostles most expressly admonish Women of this Duty; that * they *adorn themselves in modest Apparel, with Shamefacedness and Sobriety.* St. *Peter* also speaks to the same purpose, 1 *Ep.* 3. 23. Of which latter place it is to be noted, that this Apostle having recommended it to the Christian Women

† Gen. 3.

* 1 Tim. 2. 9.

men, to have their Converſation pure and chaſt, he immediately hereupon forbids Luxury, after this manner teſtifying plainly that this and vain Ornaments agree not with Chaſtity. *Let the Women,* ſays he, *be in ſubjection to their own Husbands; that if any obey not the Word, they may without the Word be won by the Converſation of the Wives. While they behold your chaſt Converſation coupled with Fear. Whoſe Adorning let it not be the outward adorning, of plaiting the Hair, or of wearing Gold, or putting on of Apparel.* Wherefore there is no doubt to be made, but Modeſty ought to be moſt exactly preſerved in the manner of Cloathing; and even to a Nicety. In other Caſes ſome Liberty is allow'd; and a Chriſtian may follow the Mode where he lives, and accuſtom himſelf to the Faſhion and Uſage, in what concerns his Habit, ſo he does not fall into Exceſs, nor lay out upon it too much Pains, too much Time, or too much Charge; and that he ſhuns Haughtineſs and Pride, and all Occaſion of Scandal. But with reſpect to Modeſty and Chaſtity, People ſhould be moſt nicely circumſpect, and never follow any Faſhion, or any way of Dreſſing, that is hurtful to Purity, in howſoever low a degree it be. This is an Article that requires great Exactneſs, eſpecially amongſt Women, whoſe Sex obliges them in a more particular manner to behave themſelves modeſtly.

Here then we may ſee a very ſenſible Proof, of the Remiſneſs of Chriſtians. In many places no regard is had to Decency in the manner of Cloathing, and Women are not dreſſed as Modeſty and Chaſtity demand; they adorn themſelves after a free, indecent, and diſſolute manner, and appear publickly in a Dreſs ſavouring of Unchaſtity. Thus Modeſty is almoſt quite loſt, in this reſpect, and the Faſhion is become ſo cuſtomary, that People have no Scruple about it. This Immo-

deſty, theſe Nakedneſſes, and this want of Shamefacedneſs, were accounted very infamous amongſt the Primitive Chriſtians. *Tertullian* deſcribing the barbarous and diſſolute Manners of the Borderers upon the *Euxine* Sea, tells among other things, that the † *Women of theſe Countries had no regard to Modeſty, and that they would appear with their Boſoms all uncovered.* Which this ancient Father noted as the Sign of an egregious Depravation; which yet is at this day too common amongſt Chriſtians. There is no need to prove that this want of Modeſty in Apparel is a great Cauſe of Impurity, and the Source of numerous Temptations, and ſinful Deſires; that it will not fail to extinguiſh Baſhfulneſs, and introduce Licentiouſneſs and Luſt, and I know not how many other dreadful Evils.

VI. Another Cauſe of this Vice is too frequent and too familiar Converſation of Perſons of both Sexes, and eſpecially whilſt they are young. And not to mention here a frequency of Meetings with ſuch as are known to be vicious and debauch'd; though it be certain the Company, the Diſcourſe, and the Examples of ſuch do very much corrupt Youth; not to mention this, I ſay that even too familiar a Converſation between Men and Women is the Cauſe and Occaſion of many Tranſgreſſions; and that nothing more naturally tends to the Corruption of Youth. This breeds in their Hearts diſorderly Paſſions and Deſires, and ſo involves many in the Crime and the many Evils that follow upon it. Wiſemen have always thought that young People, and chiefly Girls, ſhould be brought up in private, and that it is dangerous and misbecoming to allow them too much Liberty. Amongſt the *Jews*, their Girls

† Tert. adv. Marc. l. 1.

went

went little abroad, and when they did, went veiled as well as the Women. And we see the Apostle approved this Usage of theirs, in that he ordered the Women to appear veiled in the holy Assemblies, and with Tokens of Humility and Modesty; as was inviolably practiced in the Primitive Church. However these Injunctions are little observed in our Days, but rather the quite contrary; too much Liberty is given the younger sort, who are allowed to live freely, openly, and unreservedly. And so by degrees they lose their Modesty, Bashfulness, and Caution, their main Preservation against Impurity.

And here I cannot forbear touching upon one shameful and crying Enormity, very common in many Places; that is the promiscuous and scandalous accompanying of Boys and Girls together with each other, whereby they are seen, even in the Night, in a manner not only indecent, but very faulty. And which is very strange to think, this is done in the Sight and with the Knowledge of their Fathers and Mothers, who in their own Houses, and amongst their own Children suffer such infamous Familiarities, as ought by no means to be admitted of in any Nation professing Christianity. It is with great Reluctancy, that I commit these things to Writing, nor should I have done it but that the Diforders of this kind which reign in divers places compel me to it.

VII. It must be own'd likewise that War is to abundance of People a woeful School of Impurity. No doubt there are some that live chastly in this Employment, but for the Generality, every one knows that Souldiers give themselves a great Liberty in regard to Pollution, and that many of them are not ashamed to proclaim it. Nor ought this to surprize any who consider that Men of this Profession are ordinarily driven to it, either by

their Licentiouſneſs, or a Proſpect of Gain or Preferment, or through Miſery and Poverty, out of which they are not willing to extricate themſelves by honeſt Labour. Now this being the Caſe of moſt of the Souldiery, that they have wanted the Happineſs of a good Education and Inſtruction, and have ventured upon a Courſe of Life, where they meet with continual and very ſtrong Temptations, particularly Idleneſs and bad Examples, and where the Helps to Piety are very rare, and they think they have a Diſpenſation to live as they pleaſe; Can it poſſibly be expected that in theſe unhappy Circumſtances their Manners ſhould not be very corrupt, and eſpecially as to Incontinence? And which is worſe yet, being thus corrupted abroad, at their return home, they bring their Vices back with them, and ſo both abandon themſelves, and invite others to all ſort of Licentiouſneſs.

VIII. Almighty God has appointed Means, and eſpecially Marriage, for preſerving from the Defilement of Impurity. But many refuſe to enter upon this State, or at leaſt neither enter upon it, nor live in it as they ought. The Injunction of Celibacy has done abundance of Miſchief, and has introduced infinite Crimes and Abominations into the World and the Church. But many beſides, no way concern'd in this, forbear Marriage; ſome through Libertiniſm, and to be leſs confined in their Paſſions, or to avoid ſome Inconveniences they apprehend to accompany the Married Life; and others, becauſe they cannot meet with a Fortune to their mind, or helpful Relations, or other Advantages they aim at. And in the mean time not being chaſt, they hereby expoſe themſelves to continual Temptations, and cannot avoid being ever and anon overcome by them. They that are married likewiſe oftentimes

bring

bring themſelves into the ſame Difficulties, either by not living in that Purity wherein they ought to live, or becauſe they married only out of Intereſt, or Ambition, and not by Inclination and mutual Affection. Now ſuch Marriages cannot be expected to prove happy; and in truth the Effects of them are often very dreadful. Want of Kindneſs and Eſteem is ſometimes the Cauſe of breaking out into Adultery, as well as an unagreeable Temper, and a Failure in point of Eaſineſs and Compliance in the Married Perſons.

CHAP. IV.

The Fourth Cauſe of Uncleanneſs, Ill Books.

THE Fourth Cauſe of Impurity I ſhall inſtance in, is unchaſt Books. I have formerly ſhewn in † my Treatiſe *Of the Cauſes of Corruption*, how many ſorts of Books tend to corrupt the Readers Manners; but this muſt not totally prevent my touching upon the ſame Head in this place; the Miſchief that is done by this means among Chriſtians being greater than can be ſufficiently lamented.

It has been long complained of that young Men who have learned the Tongues, have been corrupted by reading and interpreting the Poets and other Heathen Authors, where they have met with divers foul and immodeſt Expreſſions, fitted to excite their Curioſity and their Paſſions. And yet were there no Books of this nature except in the learned Languages, and which therefore are

† *Part* II. *Cauſe* VII.

not

not generally underſtood, the Caſe were not near ſo bad. But alas! how many are there to be ſeen in the modern Languages, that are of no leſs pernicious Conſequence? It is oftentimes not ſo very eaſy to put even Books of Religion into the Hands of Children, where we can be ſure they ſhall meet with nothing that may any way do them hurt. Such extravagant Liberty is allowed in ſome places, that Authors make no difficulty of publiſhing whatever they pleaſe againſt Religion and good Manners. Neither do the Spiritual Governors, though perhaps ſtrict enough in Matters of far leſs Importance, nor the Civil Magiſtrate, ſet themſelves with any concern to ſuppreſs theſe dangerous Writings; but they have free Permiſſion, are bought and ſold publickly, and poſſibly *With Licence.*

There have been from time to time, and are now in our own Days, certain miſchievous Books, full of Libertiniſm, Obſcenity, Naſtineſs, ſhameful and ſcandalous Stories, againſt the very Principles of Religion; which betray ſuch a Stock of Licentiouſneſs and Impiety as is not eaſily to be conceived. But what is more ſurprizing and more ſcandalous is, that theſe Works find Patrons not only amongſt profeſs'd Libertins, but even amongſt thoſe whoſe proper Buſineſs ſhould be to undertake the Defence of Religion againſt theſe and all its Adverſaries. Theſe Books have done infinite Miſchief; have made a great number of Libertines and Atheiſts, and taught People in general, and even ſuch as had never ſtudied their Religion, to diſpute againſt it, to call it all into Queſtion, and ſophiſtically to cavil at it, not excepting the Fundamental Articles of our Faith, and the Hiſtories of the holy Scripture. But it is impoſſible to tell what Miſchief they have done, and do every day in reſpect to Impurity. Here therefore is one

one conſiderable Cauſe of this Vice; which is alſo at the ſame time a ſenſible Proof of the exceſſive Licentiouſneſs that reigns amongſt Chriſtians. We have already taken notice that it is more offenſive to ſpeak unchaſtly, than only to think ſo; but yet it is much worſe to write than to ſpeak in this manner. And the Reaſon is plain, in that what is ſaid hurts only the Hearers, and is preſently over, but what is committed to writing is more laſting, and is diſperſed all abroad. This is expoſed to the view of all, and ſo unchaſt Books become for a long time together, and to Multitudes of Perſons, a Cauſe of publick Impurity.

As Books of this Character are not fit to be read by any, ſo thoſe who have any Senſe of Religion will not know how to allow themſelves to read them. I know ſome will plead, that a Man ſhould read all ſorts of Books, that he may improve his Underſtanding by the Diverſity of Subjects that will occur in them. But there are other Books beſides thoſe which are inſtructive; and it is much better not to know ſeveral things which ſome Authors have laboured to amaſs together, which yet ſerve little to any other purpoſe than to endanger and pollute the Heart. And moreover beſides this Danger of being defiled and corrupted, there is another Reaſon for not reading theſe Books, namely, leſt they ſhould leave ſuch Impreſſions on the Mind, and ſuch Ideas in the Memory, as will not readily be baniſhed thence, and yet which, if they do not ſeduce the Heart, cauſe a great deal of Uneaſineſs and Trouble to the Soul. It is no ſtrange thing to hear People bewail the Misfortune they had in converſing with improper Authors in their Youth, and getting Love-Poems by heart, which long after recur to their Thoughts, and many times very unſeaſonably, and upon the moſt ſerious Occaſions. Some have found no

ſmall

ſmall Trouble and Diſquiet from them when lying upon their Death-beds. So that there is abundant Reaſon to abſtain from Books of this nature, which may prove very hurtful, but can do no good.

But above all it is a matter of the higheſt Conſequence to prevent young Perſons employing themſelves in this manner, and take from them not only all impure and unchaſt Books, but all wherein is any thing that tends to Impurity, all Books of Love and Gallantry, which moſt certainly ſerve to no other Uſe than to ſeduce the Mind and Heart. I might have added other Reflections upon this Subject; but I am not willing to repeat what I have already ſaid in a former Diſcourſe *.

CHAP. V.

The Fifth Cauſe. Impunity, and Want of good Government.

THE Laſt Cauſe of this Vice is Impunity, and Want of a due Execution of Government both Civil and Eccleſiaſtical.

I. In the Civil Society, Princes, Magiſtrates, and Judges ſhould conſider that this Sin is, as I have proved, contrary to the Publick Welfare, and ſhould therefore make it their ſtudy, to put a ſtop to ſo great a Nuiſance. But where is this Care taken? Where doth the Government inflict any Puniſhments upon the Impure? Or if any be inflicted, are they not ſo light, as that few are afraid of expoſing themſelves to them for the Sa-

* *Treatiſe of the Cauſes of Corruption. Part* II. *Cauſe* VII.

tisfaction

tisfaction of their Paſſions? There are in *Chriſtendom* two grievous Faults, with relation to the Society, as well as to the Laws of the Goſpel; the One in reſpect to Adultery, the Other to Divorces.

1. In reſpect to Adultery, it muſt be acknowledged to the Shame of almoſt all Chriſtian Princes and Magiſtrates, that this Crime is not puniſh'd as it ought to be; either ſufficient Proviſion is not made againſt it by good and wholſome Laws; or elſe thoſe Laws are not duly put in execution. Even the Pagans ſurpaſſed us Chriſtians herein; for they put Adulterers to death, as I have ſhewn; whereas in moſt Chriſtian States they are very gently proſecuted. I will not enter in this place upon that Queſtion, which ſome make, whether Death ought to be the Puniſhment of Adultery; but ſhall only propoſe another Queſtion; which is, Whence it comes to paſs that Chriſtian Rulers have taken upon them to enhance the Puniſhment of Thieves, and at the ſame time to leſſen that of Adulterers? † God's Law adjudged Adulterers to Death, no leſs than Murderers, but did not paſs ſo ſevere a Sentence upon Robbers. And yet Offenders in this kind loſe their Life for it; many times ſtealing what is of no great Importance is attended with Death; now ſome make a great queſtion whether this be juſt; whether capital Puniſhments for Theft be warrantable, and if this

† *Our Author's Argumentation in this place being founded upon a political Law of the* Jews, *ſeems to favour the Doctrine of* Caroloſtadius *and* Caſtellio, *who aſſerted the Validity of the Judicial Laws of that People,* (Wilhel. Zepper. l. 1. c. 2.) *Whereas it is to be conſider'd, that as we are not now under the Theocracy as the* Jews *were, ſo we cannot be obliged by their topical Laws, but all Governors are at liberty to make, and their Subjects to obey ſuch other Conſtitutions as ſeem moſt to conduce to the Good of the People where they are eſtabliſhed.*

Crime

Crime were not better proceeded againſt in another manner, more conformable to the Divine Law, and the Spirit of the Goſpel, and more conducing to the Publick Welfare. But without taking upon me to decide this Queſtion, I only ask by what Right the Proceedings againſt Robbers are ſo rigorous, whilſt Adulterers are ſuffered to live, though guilty of a much greater Injury, and which by the Law of God was to be puniſhed with Death? However if Magiſtrates think they have good Reaſon not to proceed to capital Puniſhment of Adulterers, they ought certainly to uſe all the Severity towards them that is conſiſtent with the Preſervation of their Lives. Which would be a ready way to prevent the commoneſs of this Crime. But on the contrary they are wont to be uſed with very great Indulgence, and ſuch Remiſneſs as conſiderably leſſens the Horror that every one ought to have of ſo flagitious a Crime as this is.

2. The other Fault reſpects Divorces. In relation to which the Law of our Bleſſed Saviour † is ſo expreſs, as might well caution all Judges never to grant Divorces, but in conformity to its Direction. Yet in many Countries they admit of them upon very ſlight grounds; ſeparating Huſbands and Wives upon other accounts beſides the Crime of Adultery. And what is yet a greater Abuſe, they have upon too eaſy Terms granted to the Perſons thus parted a Liberty of remarrying. It is obvious to obſerve the terrible Effects of theſe pernicious Cuſtoms. The Hope of finding a way to get rid of a Companion not beloved, or of marrying another, may tempt, and actually does tempt many Perſons to the Sins of Uncleanneſs, and ſometimes to other grievous Crimes.

† St. Mat. 5 & 19.

It needs not be added in this place, that this Law touching Divorce, is very difficult to be obſerv'd.

ſerv'd. *Tertullian* relates * that ſix hundred Years had paſſed without the knowledge of any one Divorce in the Families of the antient *Romans*, and that they came not into common Uſe, till their Manners began to be very corrupt. If the Heathens had this regard for Marriage, how can Chriſtians, who have abundantly greater Light vouchſafed them, think the Law of Chriſt too hard, and too burdenſom?

* Apolog.

I ſhall mention one thing more in this place, which is the Occaſion of manifold Miſcarriages, and that is the Convenience young People find in many places of being privately married, and in ſtrange Churches, without the Knowledge of their Relations. This Abuſe ought to be reformed, and no Marriage ſhould be celebrated except publickly, according to the Order and Rites eſtabliſhed, and in the Churches to which they belong. I muſt ſay farther before I leave this Article of Marriage, that to oblige People to reverence it and live chaſtly, the Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline ought to be exerciſed upon ſuch who marry only the better to conceal their Lewdneſs, and that when their vicious manner of Converſation comes to be diſcovered, they ſhould not eſcape the Church's Cenſures, as they too often do in many Places.

II. In the Church the Neglect of Diſcipline, which is one of the grand Cauſes of Corruption, is more particularly one of the principal Sources of Impurity. The Apoſtles who have appointed and ſo earneſtly recommended the Exerciſe of Diſcipline, have more eſpecially appointed it for the Impure; as is declared 1 *Cor.* v; where this Matter is particularly treated of. There St. *Paul* delivers it as an inviolable Law, that thoſe who indulge themſelves in this Sin are not to be ſuffer'd in the Church, but to be cut off, and not to be looked upon as Chriſtians, till they ſhall have given

ven good evidence of their Repentance. And ſeeing there was amongſt the *Corinthians* a Man guilty of horrible Impurity, he complains that ſuch a Crime had been committed amongſt them, but he complains more of the Church than of the Criminal; he cenſures the *Corinthians*; he acquaints them how dangerous it was to permit ſuch vile Trangreſſors amongſt them; and tells them the Fault of this Man hereby became the Fault of the whole Church; he does what the Church had neglected to do, makes uſe of the Power he had as an Apoſtle of delivering egregious Sinners over to Satan; and then again he repeats the Order he had given the *Corinthians*, not to look upon the Unclean as their Brethren, but to caſt them out from among them. I have otherwhere recited the expreſs Words of St. *Paul*, and have ſhewn how in the Primitive Church Diſcipline was ſtrictly exerciſed upon Adulterers. It would be requiſite alſo to put in practice what the Apoſtles ſo often enjoined, namely to avoid Familiar Converſation with ſuch who gave occaſion of Scandal by their impure Lives. By which means many might be reſtrain'd; and beſides if any had offended the Church by their Extravagances, their Fault could not then be imputed to the whole Church, nor would the Religion of our Bleſſed Saviour be diſhonour'd by it.

But the Apoſtolick Diſcipline is ſo far from being duly obſerv'd, that in divers Churches it is totally laid aſide. Inſtead of proceeding againſt the Impure in excommunicating them for a time, the Miniſters of the Church are compelled to admit to the Communion thoſe who are chargeable with infamous Sins, and to give holy things to Dogs and Swine. Heretofore a Biſhop or Prieſt that had receiv'd to the Communion known Adulterers and Fornicators, before they had given publick

Proofs

Proofs of their Repentance, would have been depoſed, and the whole Church would have reckoned ſuch an Action as a horrible and unheard of Sacrilege. But now there are Places where he that ſhould deny the Communion to theſe Men, would be depoſed for denying it.

If in ſome places where there are Laws in being, and Puniſhments determined for the Unclean, either theſe Laws impoſe only civil and corporal Corrections, or elſe they are ſome other way defective, or are but badly put in execution: The Crime is often tolerated, and goes without any Puniſhment at all; and the Actors of it know how to find out Methods of ſheltering themſelves. And where there is any ſhew of Diſcipline it is unduly adminiſtred, either by admitting Sinners to the Peace of the Church without having given good Teſtimony of the Sincerity of their Repentance; or by not making a juſt difference between their Offences, in that oftentimes the Proceedings againſt Adultery are no more ſevere than thoſe againſt Fornication; or againſt thoſe that relapſe into their Sin, than if they had only once fallen into it. Beſides, in thoſe places where this Diſcipline is in ſome ſort ſettled, it has not the force that were to be deſired, not only upon account of the Defects already mentioned, but likewiſe becauſe not being exerciſed every where, Sinners being excluded from Communion in their own Churches, need only go to ſome other Church to be admitted to the Lord's Table; which is a woful Irregularity, and the ready way to introduce a Contempt of that ſacred Ordinance, and of the Cenſures of the Church, and conſequently great Impiety. In the midſt of this general Remiſneſs of Diſcipline, it ought not to be thought ſtrange if People give themſelves up to the Sins of the Fleſh; ſince there is nothing encourages Wickedneſs like Impunity.

Theſe are the Cauſes of Impurity which I thought my ſelf chiefly concerned to take notice of; and by what has been ſaid concerning them, it is obvious to infer what are the proper Remedies for the Suppreſſion of this Vice. But theſe I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak to in the following part of this Diſcourſe.

SECTION

SECTION IV.

An Answer to the Excuses that are made for Uncleanness.

AFter what has been said of Uncleanness and the mischievous Effects of it, it is just matter of Astonishment that it should be so common. And it must be either because these forementioned Considerations are not attended to, or because People deceive and flatter themselves with a Persuasion that Uncleanness is no such great Offence, and that they may safely indulge themselves in it. Both of which is too true. The Ignorance and the Negligence of Mankind is very great in this Case; so that either they do not understand their Duty, or do not mind it. But it is certain too that there are false Reasons and insufficient Excuses whereby they make a shift to impose upon themselves. It is ordinary with Sinners to flatter themselves, and try to excuse their Miscarriages, and even to justify them. And as in other cases they do this, so no less in relation to Impurity. For which cause the Apostle St. *Paul* expressly requires that no one deceive himself in this respect, nor suffer himself to be deluded by any vain Appearances of Reason. † *Be not deceived,* says the Apostle; and again * *Let no Man deceive you with vain Words.* I come therefore now to enquire into and answer the principal Excuses whereby Men pretend to palliate this Sin.

† 1 Cor. 6. 10.

* Eph. 5. 6.

I. Some may appeal to the Propensity of Nature, and plead that God Almighty would never have given this to Mankind if they were not allowed to comply with it. But this by no means proves the lawfulness of Incontinence. For it is very certain God has given to Men a natural Inclination to those things which are for the Preservation of Life, and the Propagation of Mankind; and it is a signal Instance of his Wisdom that he has done it. It was requisite likewise that this Inclination should be strong towards those things, without which Mankind could not continue in Being. This is well worth our serious Consideration, but it is what I must content my self to have but just touched upon. But the Inclination which thus appears in Men, does in no wise authorize the Excesses into which they may fall, and unless we would set Mankind upon the same level with the Beasts, it must be acknowledged that this Inclination is to be kept under Rule and Government. Men have an Inclination to eat and drink; but can any be so senseless as to infer from hence that they are to observe no Rule or Measure in either of these? And would this natural Inclination be allowed as a good Excuse for Drunkenness or Gluttony, or the other Excesses of Intemperance? All that can reasonably be urged against this is, that this Inclination proves that something is permitted to Men. But I hope it does not prove that every thing is lawful for them; and that they are not oblig'd to a moderate use of whatever God has given them for their Nourishment. And just so it is in the Case before us.

In short, It does not follow that because Mankind are liable to certain Inclinations of their own, therefore these Inclinations can carry them away by an inevitable Force and Fatality, so as that they will be no longer able to resist them. St. *Chrysostom*

ſoſtom very effectually † confutes this Imagination, as extravagant and wicked, in a Diſcourſe againſt the *Manichees*, who charged the Work of God with being evil, and the Nature of Man with carrying him on inevitably to what is evil. He tells them it is Mens Will, not their Nature or their Body, which cauſes the Exceſſes into which they fall, and that the Inclination God has planted in them, was not given them to be abuſed to Wantonneſs and Luſt.

Our own Nature proves this. For if God has endued us with Deſires and Senſations which may tempt to divers Extravagances, he has alſo afforded us Means and Power to reſiſt their Motions. God has beſtowed two Bleſſings upon Mankind, which ſhould be ſure to keep them within their Bounds. The former is Reaſon and Modeſty. The carnal Appetite is brutiſh and blind, and is to be found in the Beaſts alſo; but Reaſon was given Man to ſubdue this Appetite, and he has it in his choice either to follow this or not, and can judge what he ought to do, and what to refrain from. And accordingly his Reaſon is to direct him as to the Paſſion now under conſideration, as well as in relation to what he eats and drinks. But in regard that Reaſon alone is not of force enough to reſtrain theſe Paſſions, I ſay farther, that God has vouchſafed Man a Supernatural Principle, namely Religion and Faith, which by the Light it gives us, the Motives it lays before us, the Hope of Eternal Happineſs, and the Fear of Hell-Torments, together with the Grace of the Holy Spirit which is hereby communicated to us, enables us effectually to reſiſt our Paſſions. Theſe Power-

† Ad Galat. Ἡ ἐπιθυμία εἰς παιδοποιΐαν, καὶ βίου σύστασιν, ἐ πρὸς μοιχείαν, καὶ πορνείαν, καὶ ἀσέλγειαν, &c. Τὸ γὰρ μοιχεύειν ἐ τῆ ἐπιθυμίᾳ ὅτι τῆ φυσικῆς, ἀλλὰ τῆ ἴβρεως τῆ παρὰ φύσιν.

ful Considerations should raise us above a shameful and brutish Inclination; and with these Assistances we may overcome ourselves, and set ourselves free from the Bondage of our Lusts. If these things were weighed as they ought to be, and all the use that might be were made of these Advantages, an Inclination to Impurity would not be able to govern Men as now it does.

II. And by this time we may see what Answer to return to a second Excuse, taken from the Difficulty of resisting this Passion. I readily agree there are some Pains required for taming the Passions; the Gospel supposes it when it exhorts to deny ourselves, to watch, and fight, and mortify our Desires. But this is no more than is required in the other Parts of our Duty. There is without doubt some trouble in curbing a Fit of Anger, or withstanding the Temptations of Avarice, Pride, and Intemperance. But this is no reason why we should not be oblig'd to conquer these Passions, nor any Proof that we cannot do it. Nor ought any more stress to be laid upon the Difficulty of resisting Impurity

1. Because this Difficulty is not universal, is not to be found in all Persons. Divers overcome their Passions easily and with no great trouble; this being the happy Condition of such who have been bless'd with a pious Education, and whose Youth has been pure. And again, as to those who may have been hurried on with a great deal of force by a vicious Inclination, I have two things to offer. The one, that they are in this Condition is their own Fault; and had they been forewarned against their fleshly Lusts in their younger Years, they wou'd not have been in subjection to them as now they are. The other, It is not yet wholly out of their power to get rid of them. God has furnished them with Remedies against Incontinence, and Means

Means of avoiding it. So that it is not yet too late to retrieve themſelves out of the State they are in, if they will be but at the Pains of heartily endeavouring it. As I ſhall ſhew when I come to treat of thoſe who are guilty of this Sin, and the Means of obtaining Chaſtity.

2. It is really not impoſſible to live in Purity, and avoid the Exceſſes of the Fleſh; there being no ground to conclude that this Duty is out of Man's Power. Which if it were, we may aſſure ourſelves Almighty God would not expreſly require it of us, and under pain of Damnation. When the Pagans commended Chaſtity and Continence, they believed it might be preſerved; and can Chriſtians to whom God has granted ſo many Graces, pretend the Practice of it to be impoſſible. The Laws of Chaſtity might indeed have been thought too ſevere, and not without an appearance of Reaſon, if we had been left wholly to ourſelves and had been made only for this World. But we are Chriſtians, to whom God has granted a new Birth, and whom he invites to a Supernatural State of Happineſs. And what can be too hard for the Grace and divine Power of the Goſpel, the Example of Jeſus Chriſt, and the Expectation of a Life to come? Ought not all theſe Bleſſings to make us ſpiritually minded, to inſpire us with ſublime and noble Thoughts, and to diſengage us from the Allurements of our groſs and brutiſh Paſſions? God who calls us to Chaſtity, lets us know on the other hand what is incumbent upon each one of us in order to it; he preſcribes us Means that will conſiderably facilitate the Practice of this Duty. As will be ſhewn more particularly hereafter.

3. But I ſay farther, Wiſemen do not ſuffer themſelves to be affrighted with Difficulties, but keep their Thoughts fixed upon the Conſequence of their Endeavours, the Benefit or Diſadvantage

that may be expected to ensue upon them. And this Consideration should put those who meet with Difficulties in the Duty here treated of, upon encountring it with Courage and Resolution, tho' it had been much greater than it is. On the one side, by doing this they procure to themselves an infinite Happiness, and advance themselves to the most blessed and most glorious State that can be imagined. Besides the Felicity whereof they shall be possessed in Heaven, who had taken care to keep their Bodies undefiled, they take the surest course to be truly happy in this present Life. They may find some trouble in resisting Temptations, but when they have got the Victory, they will never repent of having denied themselves the gratifying of their Senses; and the more Difficulty they have met with in this spiritual Conflict, the greater Comfort and Satisfaction will they enjoy when they are got well through it. Wherefore the Pleasure that arises from having shook off the Yoke of these inordinate Passions of the Flesh, should engage us all to mortify ourselves, and earnestly to strive after this happy State. On the other side, the Mischiefs and Punishments of Impurity call for our Attention, and make it necessary for us to compare Pains with Pains, and Difficulty with Difficulty, the Pains of overcoming our own Desires, and shunning the Gratifications of Sense, with the dreadful Consequents of this Sin, the Wounds it gives the Soul, and the Remorse whereto it subjects it. We should consider the several Misfortunes with which this Vice is attended here in this Life, and which make the guilty Person pay dear for infamous and transient Pleasures. But above all we must bethink ourselves, that if there be trouble in preserving Chastity, and if for this end it were necessary to pull out our Eyes, and cut off our Hands, as our Saviour speaks †, it will

† S. Mar. 9. 43. 47.

will be an incomparably greater trouble to be caſt into Hell-Fire, there to undergo the Tortures which Almighty God has prepared for the Unclean. Theſe fleſhly Pleaſures are but little, and are over in a Moment, but the Pains of the Life to come are terrible, and yet will never have an end.

III. It may be farther urged That every one has not the Gift of Continence, for ſo ſome wreſt that of St. *Paul*, 1 Cor. 7. 9. But the Apoſtle anſwers this in the very ſame place, declaring that for thoſe who cannot live ſingle, Marriage is ordained as a holy and honourable State, provided they live chaſtly in it. Again, if this Argument were good, there is no Sin that might not be excuſed. All Virtues are the Gift of God as well as Continence; his Grace being alike neceſſary in order to the Government of Mens Anger, and for rendring them ſober, Affable, or Charitable, as it is for reſiſting Uncleanneſs. And one that allows himſelf in Tranſports of Anger, or lives in Drunkenneſs and Debauchery, and will neither forgive an Injury or Affront, nor relieve a poor Neighbour, may as well ſay for himſelf, that he has not the Gift of Meekneſs, of Patience, of Sobriety, or of Charity. The Caſe thus ſtated, who ſees not that this is a vain and frivolous Excuſe, and indeed a wicked and impious one? For to ſay Uncleanneſs is no way to be avoided, becauſe God has not beſtowed the Gift of avoiding it, is to accuſe God himſelf, and impute to his divine Majeſty all the Exceſſes whereinto any are hurried by this infamous Paſſion.

Grace is certainly neceſſary for us, and it is a Gift of God without which we can do no good thing. But then it is as certain that God is ready to vouchſafe us this Gift, on condition we will do our part for obtaining it. And this is to be done by Prayer, God having engaged † *to give his Holy Spirit* † St. Lu. 11. 13.

Spirit to them that ask him, and by Fasting, Working, and other Methods which I shall touch upon in their proper place; which Means when made use of as they ought to be, are not so difficult as is ordinarily apprehended. And God does yet more than this; he freely bestows his Grace, and prevents us by his Spirit, and so puts it into our Power to be Masters of this Gift of Chastity, if it be not through our own Fault. Who are they then that complain for want of this Gift? Are they not such who will not have it, such who neglect Prayer and all other Means, and will not hearken to all the good Motions which the Holy Spirit excites in them, and the other Advantages that are vouchsafed them; but rather on the contrary do all they can to deprive themselves of this Gift if they had it, loving Temptations, and wilfully putting themselves in the way of them? No better can be expected of such, than that they should want this Gift of Chastity. And it is highly unreasonable therefore to insist upon so frivolous an Excuse. If People will not perform their own Duty; yet at least they should not dare to charge God as the Author of all the Wickedness they commit.

IV. Lastly, Those who are guilty of this Vice may seek to shelter themselves under the Examples they find in Scripture of several that have fallen into the Sins of Uncleanness. Which Excuse I have formerly considered * in another Work; and so it will suffice at present only to alledge, that

1. No Examples can justify the Violation of the Divine Laws, and that the Sins of which we have any Relation in the sacred Volumes, serve only for Admonitions that we be constantly upon our Guard. We must not judge of what is allowed or forbidden by Examples, but by the Law of God,

* *Causes of Corruption, Part* I. *Cause* IV.

which

which is the Rule whereby he will judge us at the Laſt-Day.

2. We have admirable Patterns of Chaſtity propoſed to us in Scripture, that we may be invited to the imitation of them, as that of *Joſeph*, of *Job*, and other holy Men who have been eminent for this Virtue.

3. It is to be conſidered that theſe Sins with which ſome of the Faithful recorded in the Old Teſtament were overtaken, were grievous Sins, and wherein they muſt have inevitably periſhed, if they had not recovered out of them by a ſincere Repentance. And if it ſhould be objected as the Conſequence of this Aſſertion, that Sinners may recover of themſelves and obtain the Pardon of their Sins, and ſo the Danger of falling into them is not ſo great; I anſwer that God is ready to ſhew Favour to the Penitent; but that it is the utmoſt height of Folly, and extremely dangerous to live in Sin upon this Conſideration; and it ſhews an exceedingly depraved Mind to offend and provoke God, only becauſe he is ſo very good. And he that does ſo impoſes miſerably upon himſelf, in promiſing himſelf that he ſhall be ſure to repent; this being what he can have no certainty of. And if any find themſelves diſpoſed to take encouragement from the Example of thoſe who have riſen again after terrible Falls, let ſuch know they have much more reaſon to tremble at the Remembrance of others who have fallen in like manner, and have been utterly undone by it.

4. Once more, The Difference that is betwixt the Times of the Goſpel and thoſe that were before, may juſtly ſilence all theſe vain Excuſes. What our Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt* ſays St. *Matt.* Ch. V. and XIX. concerning Divorce and Adultery, ſhews clearly that the Duties of Chaſtity under the Old Law were very different from what is now required

red of us, and that God, out of regard to the Eſtate of the *Jews*, and the carnal Temper of their Mind, paſſed by many Defects by reaſon of which Chriſtians will be excluded the Kingdom of Heaven. And no one that well underſtands to what a Degree of Holineſs we are called by the Goſpel, will ever dare to alledge the Falls of thoſe who lived before Chriſt, in Excuſe of their Impurity.

SECTION

SECTION V.

The Duties of Offenders in this kind.

AFTER having treated thus largely of Uncleanneſs, before I leave this Subject, it will be requiſite to enquire what is incumbent upon ſuch as are chargeable with this Sin, in order to the Pardon of it. This is a moſt important Article, and concerning which all have great need to be well inſtructed. And the rather becauſe theſe Duties are little underſtood, the greateſt part of thoſe who are moſt concerned in them not knowing what they are to do that they may recover themſelves from their Fall. Some will pretend to expiate this Sin by I know not what defective and inſincere Repentance, and by this means lead many into Perdition. And hence my Deſign in this Section is to give ſome account of what all that are guilty of this Sin are obliged to. And it is what thoſe who have fallen into the Crime are in a peculiar manner concerned to read with great Attention. And thoſe who have not proceeded to the Crime, but are chargeable however with other leſſer Species of Impurity, will find ſeveral Particulars in what I am about to ſay, that will relate to themſelves. Nor is there any Perſon whatſoever that may not make ſome good uſe of it. The Conſideration of what an Unclean Perſon is to do for obtaining the Pardon of his Offence, is a powerful Motive for perſuading to refrain from this Sin. And were every one throughly inſtructed in this Point, People would be far more fearful

ful of yielding to the sinful Lusts of the Flesh, than they usually are.

In general, Every one is convinced that there is no obtaining the Pardon of this Sin, any more than of others, without Repentance. But People are apt to deceive themselves concerning the Nature of Repentance, as not well knowing in what it consists. That I may therefore explain this with some exactness, I say that to repent savingly of this Sin, it is necessary first to be Sorry for it; secondly to Confess it; thirdly to endeavour a Reparation of it; and lastly, to renounce and forsake it.

CHAP. I.

The first Duty of Offenders in this kind, Sorrow for their Sin.

THE First Branch of Repentance, and the First Duty of the Impure is a Sorrow for what they have done. But now that they may not deceive themselves, they ought to be made sensible what is to be the ground of this Sorrow, and what the Degree and Measure of it.

I. It is absolutely necessary to enquire into the Principle whence the Sorrow they feel in themselves proceeds; inasmuch as this Sorrow is not always saving, nor ought it to be believed that all who are afflicted and mourn for the Irregularites of their Lives, are to be accounted true Penitents. The Grief which many feel in themselves, or at least pretend to, is for the most part no better than a worldly Grief. That which sticks so close upon them is very often only a Fretting and Vexation, Shame and Displeasure to find themselves in Disgrace,

grace, or expoſed to other Temporal Misfortunes, which their Incontinence has brought upon them. One Proof of this is, that the greater part give no Token of their being inwardly afflicted till their Crime comes to be diſcover'd, and ſo they come experimentally to find in what Evils they have involved themſelves by their ill Conduct. Whilſt they can ſin ſecretly, and without fear of Diſcovery, they continue in their Licentiouſneſs, and take Delight in it. Such a Sorrow is not ſaving, unleſs the Sinner make a farther Progreſs, and improve the Almighty's Chaſtiſements to the begetting in him an unfeigned Abhorrence of his paſt Tranſgreſſions. Wherefore the Principle and Cauſe of his Grief muſt be the Greatneſs of the Sin it ſelf, and the woful Eſtate whereinto it brings Men in relation to God and their own Salvation. Without repeating here all the Conſiderations which may juſtly raiſe in us an Abhorrence of Impurity, I ſhall content my ſelf to note, that no Repentance is acceptable in the Sight of God, that does not ariſe from ſuch Meditations as theſe. For which reaſon thoſe who know themſelves guilty, ſhould weigh them well with themſelves, and have them always preſent to their Mind. And foraſmuch as ſome are more guilty than others, every one ſhould conſider the Nature and Circumſtances of the Sins which he has committed, that ſo his Senſe of them and Repentance for them may bear a proportion to the Heinouſneſs of them.

II. As to the Degree and Meaſure of this Sorrow, two Qualifications are to be attended to, that is, the Greatneſs of it, and its Duration.

1. It is not enough to be ſomewhat grieved, and aſhamed, but this Grief muſt be affecting, ſuch as enters deep and pierces the very Heart, filling it with Sadneſs and Remorſe, Deteſtation and Fear; or if it be not ſuch at the beginning, it muſt be ſuch

such at length. This is above all others the one infallible Mark of a hearty Sorrow and sincere Repentance; that the Sinner finds no longer any Pleasure or Satisfaction in the things he had formerly delighted in, but seeks to withdraw and get out of the way of them, and finds more Comfort in his Sadness and Tears for them. Sometimes those that have renounced their Uncleanness, have turned aside another way, and betaken themselves to Pleasures of another nature. But so long as they retain an Affection for worldly Pleasures and Joys of whatsoever kind, this is a certain Sign of their not being touched with a true Repentance.

2. But above all Care must be taken that this Grief be lasting. And this Observation serves not only for the Instruction of the Guilty, but is useful also for the Encouragement of such who do not at the first feel themselves so throughly grieved as they ought to be. For Mens Sorrow is oftentimes but light at the beginning of their Conversion; as will easily be apprehended if we but call to mind that there are two sorts of Sins. Some there are for which a Man is apt to have an extreme Concern as soon as ever he has committed them; and they are such as he is not betraied into by his own Inclinations, nor can take Delight in: Thus when one has committed a Murder, or spoken Blasphemy, he will perhaps be immediately struck with the Horror of his Crime, and a stinging Remorse by reason of it. But it is quite otherwise with those Sins into which Men are drawn by Pleasure, and which gratify their Inclinations, and especially when they are become Habitual. Tho' they take up a Resolution of quitting these, they do not at first look upon them with the Aversion due to them, they could yet please themselves with them, and it is not without doing Violence to

to themſelves, and reſiſting their own Inclinations, that they get rid of them. So that their Diſlike of theſe ſort of Sins is but ſmall at the firſt, the Fire of Luſt not being yet wholly extinct. But the chief Commendation of it is, that it is Laſting, and encreaſes continually. And this is what they ought to have an eſpecial Regard to, the Cauſe of moſt Mens Failings in theſe Attempts being, that in time the Senſe of their Crime abates, and at laſt wears quite away.

The Repentance of thoſe who are polluted by Uncleanneſs, ſhould remain with them to their Lives End. Theſe are not Sins which a Man can forget; and the Memory of them ought to be always freſh, that the Penitent may truly ſay with *David*, † *My Sin is ever before me.* Not only the Time that has paſt ſince the Commiſſion of it, but even an Amendment of Life does not take away the Senſe of ſo great a Fault; but on the contrary he becomes more and more ſenſible of it. Even this Thought, that the Sinner has had the Happineſs to obtain the Pardon of his Guilt, will render the Remembrance of it the more bitter. And the greater Progreſs he makes in Holineſs, the more abominable will his Wickedneſs appear; the greater Experience he has had of God's Mercy, the more will he accuſe and loath himſelf; and the more Hope he has of Salvation through God's Goodneſs, the more will he be affected with the Danger of being excluded from it, to which he had expoſed himſelf. In a word, The greater Mercy God has ſhewn in Pardoning, the more reaſon has the pardoned Sinner to love God; And the more any one loves God, the more nearly will he be touched with the Thought of having offended Him. † Pſ. 51. 3.

This is the Firſt Duty of ſuch as are chargeable with Impurity, to have a lively, a hearty and pier-

cing Sorrow for it. And if thoſe who find not in themſelves ſuch a Sorrow as I have been deſcribing, are not in a State of Salvation, what can we think of thoſe who have no ſenſe at all of their Sin, but inſtead of condemning, ſeek to excuſe themſelves, and are ſo far from having a pungent Regret, and being in Confuſion by reaſon of their Sin, that they take delight in thinking and ſpeaking of it, and even boaſt of and glory in it.

CHAP. II.

The Second Duty, Confeſſion.

THe Second Duty incumbent upon ſuch as are guilty of this Sin, is Confeſſion. I need not ſay that there is no repenting ſincerely of our Sins without confeſſing them, this is ſo evident of itſelf. But then ſeeing there are two ſorts of Confeſſion, the one made to God alone, and the other made to Men, it will be requiſite to enquire, What is the Duty of thoſe who are guilty of Impurity, with reſpect to each of theſe?

I. Now foraſmuch as none doubts of the Neceſſity of Confeſſing his Sins to God, I ſhall not enlarge upon this Article, but ſhall content myſelf to mention only theſe two Obſervations concerning it. Firſt that this Confeſſion is to be made with an unfeigned Sorrow of Heart, and not with the Mouth only. For conſidering to whom it is made, that it is to Almighty God, who is the Searcher of Hearts, and throughly knows whatſoever paſſes there, it highly concerns every one to beware of pretending to own his Sins before Him, and to beg his Pardon for them, if the Caſe be not ſo, and he is not truly touched with a Senſe of them.

them. Secondly, that this Confeſſion is a moſt effectual Means of raiſing more and more in us a hearty Compunction, and utter Abhorrence of our Sin; it being impoſſible for a Sinner who conſiders himſelf as in the Preſence of God, and calls to his Remembrance the heinous Immoralities he has lived in, and makes a particular Confeſſion of them, who acknowledges in the Preſence of the Moſt Holy God his ſinful Actions, together with thoſe impure Thoughts and Motions to which he has ſuffer'd himſelf to hearken; it being impoſſible, I ſay, for ſuch a Sinner, at ſuch a time, not to conceive an Abhorrence of his Impieties, and that a Confeſſion ſo made, ſuch a black Catalogue expoſed to the Eyes of the Almighty, ſhou'd not fill his guilty Soul with Shame, and Confuſion, and Indignation againſt himſelf.

II. Confeſſion made to Man is either publick or private.

1. Publick Confeſſion is ſuch as is made either before the Church in general, or before thoſe who repreſent it, according to the different Cuſtoms of Places. Now ſuch who have fallen into the Sin of Uncleanneſs, muſt Confeſs their Fault publickly, when it is come to the knowledge of the Church, and they are called upon to tell the Truth. In this Caſe it ought to be believed, that God having permitted the Fault to be publickly known, it is his Will to have Confeſſion made of it. And accordingly the Offender is to own it ingeniouſly, and diſcharge his Conſcience of it, whenever he is ſummoned to do it, by thoſe to whom God has committed the Government of his Church with a Power of Excluding notorious Tranſgreſſors. Nor will any one ſtick at ſuch an Acknowledgment, who is touched with a ſincere Repentance; but whoſoever refuſes in theſe Circumſtances to confeſs his Sins, thereby gives certain Evidence of his Impe-

nitence, and ſo can hope for no forgiveneſs. Beſides there is an Obligation to confeſs the truth in order to the removal of that Scandal theſe ſort of Vices give in the Church, for the Comfort and Edification of good People, who cannot but be afflicted by reaſon of theſe Vices, and to ſet an Example to others, this Confeſſion being a moſt likely means of reſtraining thoſe who find themſelves inclined to Wickedneſs. So that a Man cannot refuſe this Duty without aggravating the Sin he has committed. Beſides that in denying what he is juſtly charged with, he thereby charges his Accuſer with having publiſhed an Untruth, and made a falſe Declaration; which is equally inconſiſtent with Piety, Juſtice, and Charity. Not to add that Perſons by denying their Guilt in this caſe of Uncleanneſs, oftentimes engage themſelves in another horrible Crime, of refuſing to own ſuch Children as they are under an undoubted Obligation to take care of.

Yet how great ſoever their Crime be, who refuſe to confeſs their Sin, nothing is more common with the Impure, and eſpecially the Men, than to deny the Truth. They betake themſelves to Lying and ſly Pretences, ſeeking to defend themſelves by all the Tricks they are able to invent. Nor are there wanting ſome, who though bound by the moſt tremendous Oath to confeſs their Fault, deny it upon Oath, and labour to conceal their Wickedneſs by Perjury, and the moſt ſolemn Proteſtations accompanied with Imprecations againſt themſelves. Which is doubtleſs one of the moſt heinous Wickedneſſes a Man can be guilty of, one of the moſt diſmal Eſtates a Man can caſt himſelf into. Beſides the flagitiouſneſs of the Crime, the Effects of it are terrible; and what is yet more formidable is, that hereby a Door is ſhut againſt Repentance. It cannot be denied but a Man may

may recover himſelf by confeſſing what he had denied, but it is what is hardly ever reſolved upon. And the longer the time paſſes on, the greater Impreſſion thoſe falſe Reaſons which are offered to conceal his Fault, will make. A ſolemn Declaration alſo being once made, he holds himſelf engaged in Honour to ſtand to it, and to do this puts himſelf upon a neceſſity of perſiſting in his Impenitence. Or perhaps he enters upon Marriage, or has a Family of his own, or is in ſome Employment, or finds himſelf in other Circumſtances, which withold him from owning afterwards, what he had once endeavoured to conceal.

The Caſe of ſuch is exceeding dreadful, and all their religious Performances no better than ſo many Acts of Sacrilege. How can they pray to God, or offer themſelves to the holy Communion? And what Uneaſineſs then, what Frights muſt they be in, having ſuch a Load upon their Conſcience, and eſpecially when they are about to leave this World? Then will theſe miſerable Wretches who have covered their Sin by Lying, Perjury, and other Crimes, and have perſevered in ſo doing to the laſt, be racked with horrible Remorſe. They will then begin to open their Eyes, and to judge of things after another manner than they had done formerly, and will abominate their own blind Madneſs, and wou'd give all the World, were it at their diſpoſal, that they had made a ſincere Acknowledgment of their Sin. It is undoubtedly an exceſſive degree of Folly and Madneſs, to chooſe rather to throw oneſelf into ſo frightful a State, and ſo to be brought within the Bonds and Snares of the Devil, than by a free and impartial Confeſſion to ſet the Conſcience at eaſe, and enjoy the Happineſs and Satisfaction that would follow hereupon. And all therefore who are concerned in what I am ſaying, ſhould be ſure to conſider it

well in time, and ſhould take care to Confeſs their Sin whilſt they may; leſt hereafter they be far leſs willing to do it.

The chief Obſtacle to People's Confeſſion of their Faults of this kind, is Shame and the Fear of being Diſgraced. But this is a wicked Shame, and a Procedure every way unreaſonable. For firſt they are groſsly deceiv'd in thinking that by a Denial of the Truth they ſhall eſcape the Shame they are ſo afraid of. For for the moſt part it is obſervable that they are not the leſs expoſed, though they do deny their Guilt, after it has taken Air, and they are required to make a publick Confeſſion of it. They are not thought the leſs faulty in this caſe, but on the other hand are had in greater Contempt. But farther it is a Miſtake to think Confeſſion of Sin to be juſt matter of Shame. If the Caſe were rightly ſtated, it is rather honourable than ſhameful to acknowledge the Evil we have done. The Shame is only in doing wickedly; but it is a laudable Action to Confeſs the Wickedneſs we have done, ſuch an Acknowledgment being ſome ſort of Reparation for it. Hereby the Sinner waſhes off the Stain which Sin has cauſed in the Soul; hereby he is reſtored to Peace with God, he rejoices both the Angels in Heaven and the Church on Earth, and all Wiſemen look upon him with an Eye of Love and Compaſſion.

But ſuppoſing a Man were hereby expoſed to Shame in this World, and that Men would be ſure to paſs their Cenſures upon him, he ought not to be deterred by this. The Fear of another ſort of Shame, and another greater Puniſhment ſhould ſet him above the Dread of Men. And yet after all, Are the Conſequences of a ſincere Acknowledgment to be feared even in this World? Though a Man expoſe himſelf to the Contempt of Men, and to be reproached and reviled by them, what

ſigni-

ſignifies this Contempt? The Judgment Men make of us, whether in our Favour or to our Diſadvantage, is of very little conſideration. Their Approbation or Diſlike of us determines nothing, and is quickly forgotten; but the Effects of a Lye perſiſted in are very dreadful. The Shame which one may ſuffer in this World is preſently over, it vaniſhes away, and the Men themſelves dy; but the Miſchiefs whereto Obſtinacy in Wickedneſs renders Sinners obnoxous will never have an End; but they muſt be expoſed in the Sight of God himſelf, of his Holy Angels, and of Men, to an Ignominy infinitely more formidable than all that is moſt ſhameful and moſt painful here below.

Shame will never prevail over that Man who is heartily grieved for the Sins he has committed. A true Penitent accounts of the Shame as a ſmall matter; and he no longer ſtands in awe of Men's Judgment, when once he is heartily affected with the Terrour of God's Judgments. *David* ſinned; but he was not aſhamed, though a King, to own his Crime, not only before the Prophet *Nathan*, but in a far more publick Manner, by compoſing the Fifty-firſt Pſalm upon this Subject, to be to the End of the World a laſting Teſtimony of his Repentance. A Sinner who is really ſenſible of his Fault, ſtands not to heſitate with himſelf, as to his Behaviour when called to Confeſs; nor does Shame any way withold him from it. Being overwhelmed with a much greater Shame, for having defiled himſelf, offended God, and ſcandalized the Church; he does not ſo much attend to his own preſent Intereſt, or any worldly Conſiderations, but that he eſteems it his Honour to waſh off his Defilement by ſuch an Acknowledgment as may make ſome Amends for it. And how ſenſible ſoever he be of the Shame that follows upon ſuch an Acknowledgment, he willingly ſubmits to it, as a

good degree of Mortification. He looks upon it as one ſort of Puniſhment, and an Occaſion of humbling himſelf, and ſubduing his vicious Inclinations, and is very glad of an Opportunity of giving ſuch evidence of his Sincerity and Repentance. A true Repentance fills the Sinner with Indignation, and a Deſire of taking all poſſible Revenge upon himſelf, and being convinced that he has deſerved yet more Shame than he has met with, he readily ſubmits himſelf to whatſoever is moſt mortifying to him, and moſt uſeful for taming his Fleſh and its Paſſions.

I have treated ſomewhat largely of this Article, becauſe of the Neceſſity there is of preſſing it, and becauſe it is ordinarily by reaſon of an unaccountable Shame that the Impure ſuffer themſelves to periſh.

And yet it is not to be thought that all who acknowledge their Sin make a ſaving Confeſſion. Many confeſs their Fault, but not except in caſe of Extremity, and when they can deny it no longer. And this Confeſſion they make with ſo little of Frankneſs, and ſuch Reſerves and Shifts, that it is eaſily ſeen it is all forced, and drawn from them by pure Neceſſity. An evident Token of an Evil, a Wicked and Hard Heart! Every one ſees alſo that they live afterwards in ſuch a manner, as ſhews no true Amendment. Yet it is only a ſincere and ingenuous Confeſſion of Sin that will be available in order to Forgiveneſs.

2. I have hitherto diſcourſed of ſuch whoſe Guilt is known. But it may farther be enquired, Whether thoſe whoſe Fault is ſtill concealed are obliged to Confeſs it; and how they are in this caſe to behave themſelves? Which is a weighty Queſtion, and concerns a great part of Mankind, only that it is as nice as weighty.

I

I ſay therefore in the firſt place, that Whilſt a Fault is not come abroad, the Offender is not only not obliged to confeſs it publickly, but that he ought not to confeſs it in this manner, that he ſcandalize not the Church, by bringing to its Knowledge a Sin it had otherwiſe heard nothing of. But then I ſay this purely upon ſuppoſition that this Sin has been kept ſecret, and he has never been required, nor enter'd into any Obligation to own it in Publick. It is not to be imagined that it was ever allowed to uſe any unlawful courſes for preventing theſe Faults being made known, ſuch as Lying, falſe Declarations, the Expoſing or Abandoning Children, or thoſe other ſinful Means Unclean Perſons are wont to make uſe of for preſerving their Faults from a publick Diſcovery. It were much better that a Fault ſhould become publick, than to conceal it after this manner, this being a means of aggravating it, of putting the Sinner out of a Capacity of Amendment, and of engaging themſelves in a Neceſſity of remaining all his Life in a ſtate of Impenitence, which it is impoſſible to get out of whilſt he makes it his Buſineſs to conceal one Wickedneſs by the help of another.

Well, but ſuppoſe the Sin not to be known, what is to be done in this Caſe? I anſwer in general, the guilty Perſon is to endeavour to eaſe himſelf of it by a true Repentance. He muſt omit nothing that is neceſſary to this purpoſe; muſt privately humble himſelf before God, muſt amend his Fault, and uſe all means poſſible for disburdening his Conſcience, muſt deny himſelf for ſome time the participation of the holy Communion, and obſerve thoſe Duties incumbent upon Offenders, which I am about to mention. But ſtill it may be queſtioned Whether theſe Perſons are to confeſs their Sin in Private.

I ſay

I ſay a Private Confeſſion may be of very great Advantage, and that upon ſome Occaſions it muſt be made uſe of; it may happen that a Man may be indiſpenſably obliged to it, if the Sinner is perplexed with Scruples, or cannot well enform himſelf what courſe he muſt take to riſe again after his Fall, or is in doubt concerning the truth and reality of his Repentance; it is certain that being in theſe Circumſtances, and ſo having need of Aſſiſtance and Advice, he cannot do better than to apply himſelf to ſome Perſon of known Underſtanding and Probity. Generally thoſe who are guilty of great Sins, will not know what to do without ſome help. And it is certain that Multitudes periſh for want of Courage to lay themſelves open to their Spiritual Phyſician. Unleſs the Sinner throughly underſtand his own Caſe, and his Conſcience be tender enough to direct him, a Happineſs rarely to be met with amongſt the Impure, it is of neceſſity that he conſult ſome other Perſon. He may addreſs himſelf to whomſoever he ſhall think fit upon ſuch an Occaſion, and freely open his Mind to him. But the Miniſters of the Goſpel being ordained to watch over Men's Souls, and Almighty God having authorized them to pronounce Pardon upon the Terms of the Goſpel; and ſince it is beſides to be preſumed that they are better skilled in matters of Religion than their Neighbours, the beſt courſe the guilty Sinner can take will be to addreſs himſelf to his own Spiritual Guide. This was the Practice of the Primitive Church. Publick Penances were appointed amongſt the Ancient Chriſtians for publick Sins. But when any had committed a Sin in private, which had it been known, would have required a publick Confeſſion, he then betook himſelf to the Miniſters of the Church, to receive by their means ſuch Advice, Exhortation, and Comfort as his Condition called for.

But

But now in order to the putting this in practice, a Man ſhould be fully aſſured of the Ability, and eſpecially the Probity of theſe Miniſters, ſo as to have an entire Confidence in them; and they on the other hand ſtand engaged to keep what is Confeſſed as an inviolable Secret. Whence by the way it may be obſerved, of what mighty importance it is that none but wiſe, prudent, and diſcreet, underſtanding, and truly religious Perſons be ever admitted to this ſacred Function.

When Sinners thus addreſs themſelves to their Spiritual Guides, it is Their Part to give them all neceſſary Advice, to repreſent to them the Heinouſneſs of their Sin, to ſee what Tokens and Aſſurances they can give of the Sincerity of their Repentance, and to acquaint them what they are to do by way of Reparation for their Sin, or in order to their own Recovery out of it. They ſhould alſo examine whether their People be fit to receive the holy Sacrament, and to deny them it for ſome time, till they diſcover in them the Signs of a real Reformation, and pronounce the Pardon of their Sins.

I ſpeak not here of the private Admonitions they ſhould give to ſuch as live looſly, as they have opportunity, and though never conſulted by them, becauſe this is not the proper place for it.

It is not only before † the Prieſts that People ſhould acknowledge their Faults, but there are ſome Caſes wherein it ſhould be done before others. Thus they ought to own them in the preſence of ſuch as are to take cognizance of them in order to their Edification. It is certain they

† *Here I render* les Paſteurs, the Prieſts, *becauſe it is to the Prieſts only that our Lord has committed a Power of abſolving Penitents.*

are

are to confeſs them in ſecret, when there is no other way to prevent the great Miſchief that might enſue from a more publick Confeſſion of them. It is a ruled Caſe, that rather than permit an Inceſtuous Marriage between two Perſons, who neither know nor ſuſpect themſelves to be Brother and Siſter, but yet are ſo, one of them being of an impure Birth, the guilty Father or Mother, if no other Method can be contrived for hindring ſuch a Marriage, ought to declare his, or her, Crime, yet with all the Secrecy that may be. But out of this Caſe of abſolute neceſſity, theſe kind of Sins are not to be diſcovered, for fear of the Conſequences ſuch a Diſcovery might have, the Breaches in, and Diſhonour of Families, and many other Miſchiefs it might produce. A Man ſhould rather ſeek the Reparation of his Offence by ſecret Means; only he muſt be ſure to do it with great Sincerity and Honeſty, and ſo as that Conſcience be no way entangled by it.

CHAP. III.

The Third Duty of the Unclean, A Reparation of the Evil they have done.

THE Third Duty whereto the Impure ſtand obliged is to make Reparation for their Sin. It is an uncontroverted Principle of Religion, as well as of natural Juſtice, that every one muſt make Satisfaction to the utmoſt of his Power, for all the Evil he has done; it being evident that without this there is no Repentance, and by conſequence no Pardon. He that labours not with all his might to repair a Fault he has committed, or an Injury he has done to another, hereby teſtifies that

that he does not unfeignedly repent of it, and that he has no true Senſe of either Juſtice, Charity, or Piety. Which Remark I make for the Information of ſuch who conceit that their Sins may be forgiven them, though they do not make Reparation for the Miſchief done by them, only upon condition that they repent and fly to the Mercy of God. This is utterly impoſſible. For Repentance and Recourſe to the Divine Mercy are never ſincere, till the Sinner uſes his hearty endeavour to Repair the Evil he has done.

Now the Reparation Perſons are bound to for the Sin of Impurity, reſpects our Neighbours Intereſt either Temporal or Eternal.

I. In reſpect to Temporal Intereſt a Man may prejudice his Neighbour in his Honour and Reputation, in his Goods, or upon other accounts; and he ſhould therefore make it his Buſineſs in each of theſe Inſtances, to Repair the Evil he has done. We ſee in the Law, that God who had ordered Thieves * to make a full Reſtitution, has ordered the ſame likewiſe for the Sins of Impurity, † He that had abuſed a Virgin was to *take her for his Wife*; and moreover the Law imports that whoſoever had eſpouſed a Woman after this manner was *never after to put her away*. Whereby it appears ♁ that one Method of making Amends for this Sin is by marrying the Perſon who has been ſeduced. And this is eſpecially to be done when any Promiſes have been made to each other; ſuppoſing withal that they are both free, and in a Capacity of Contracting. If this cannot be, as in many Caſes it plainly cannot, and there is no Repairing theſe Sins by Marriage, ſome other courſe muſt be taken for making Reparation of the Damage done to the

* Exod. 22. 3.

† Numb. 5. 7. † Deut. 22. 29.

♁ Grot. de Jure belli ac pacis. l. 2. cap. 17. 15.

Perſon

Perſon enticed. The Law of God points out this Duty, ‖ enjoining that *if the Father of the Damſel* refuſed to give her in Marriage to him who had ſeduced her, the Perſon ſeducing ſhould pay a Summ of Money. Whence it follows that one of the ways of Repairing this Crime, when it cannot be done by Marriage, is by giving a Portion, or a Summ proportionable to the Condition of the Perſon, other Circumſtances alſo conſidered.

‖ Exod. 22. 17.

Another Duty, and indeed the moſt indiſpenſable of all with reſpect to this World, is to procure that no harm be done to the Children born of theſe unlawful Mixtures, but moſt diligently to provide for their Support and Education. I have already † treated of this Duty, and have proved that it would be a horrible Crime to caſt them off. And not only ſo, but Proviſion muſt be made for their Education and for their Maintenance with ſo much the more care, becauſe the Condition of theſe Children is ordinarily very uncomfortable, and they are born into the World in a ſtate of Shame and Miſery.

† Sect. 1. Ch. 1.

Laſtly, There is no manner of doubt but in the Crime of Adultery, Reſtitution is to be made to thoſe who ſuffer by it; as when a Father is put to the charge of maintaining a Child that is none of his own, and when a Child that is come into a Family by Adultery, partakes, with the lawful Children and Heirs, of an Eſtate that does not at all belong to him. In either of theſe Caſes, the guilty Perſons are indiſpenſably obliged to Reſtitution to the Father or the Children. Only this muſt be ſure to be done privately, ſo long as the Crime is not known; though if it were known, then the Reſtitution ſhould be publick. Nothing can excuſe from this Duty; without which it is impoſſible the Offenders ſhould have

their

their Crime pardoned, ſave only when they have it by no means in their Power to make ſuch Reſtitution. And yet even in this Caſe, they muſt be ſincerely and conſtantly reſolved, to make it as ſoon as ever they ſhall be able, and muſt endeavour it heartily, and to the utmoſt of their Ability. Nor are they Divines only and Moraliſts who preſcribe this Duty as indiſpenſable; * the Lawyers alſo declare the Juſtice and Neceſſity of it.

This Article ſhould beget a great Abhorrence of Senſuality, and make People tremble at the thoughts of giving themſelves up to it. And would they ſeriouſly conſider it, certainly they could never ſuffer themſelves to be enticed to the filthy Luſts of the Fleſh, nor would thoſe who are guilty of it be near ſo eaſy as they are for the moſt part. They would quickly ſee that by committing this Sin, they plunge themſelves into abundance of Misfortunes, they entangle themſelves in ſtrange Difficulties, and prepare for themſelves terrible Remorſe, and cruel Uneaſineſs. This Reflection Mr. *Placette* moſt judiciouſly makes in his *Treatiſe of Reſtitution*, at the End of the XIIIth Chapter. Having diſcourſed of the Reſtitution whereto Perſons are obliged in caſe of Adultery, he concludes thus, *What I have ſaid ſhews into what Snares, and Troubles, they that commit this great Sin, caſt themſelves. Which if People would at all mind, perhaps they would ſhun them more carefully than they do. But they either do not know them, or are not willing to conſider them. In a word, Mankind lead their Lives, as if the Violaters of this*

* Grot. de Jur. b. ac p. l. 2. c. 17. 15. *Adulter & Adultera tenentur non tantum, indemnem præſtare maritum ab alendâ prole, ſed & legitimis hæredibus rependere, ſi quod damnum patiuntur, ex accurſu ita ſuſceptæ prolis ad hæreditatem.*

Law

Law had neither Juſtice to overawe them, nor Puniſhment to ſtand in fear of. I beſeech all whom this concerns to reflect upon it in time; and that they will give themſelves the trouble of reading the XIth, XIIth, and XIIIth Chapters of that ſame Treatiſe, where this Matter is handled at large.

II. I added that Reparation is to be made for the Damage any one has done his Neighbour as to his Spiritual Intereſt. And this requires two Duties, the one general, and the other particular.

1. The general Duty is to make amends for the Scandal which has been given, either to ſome who have come to the knowledge of the Crime, or to the whole Church. In the former Caſe a Man ſhould omit nothing that is neceſſary for the Edification of thoſe he has ſcandalized, for comforting ſuch good Chriſtians as are greatly afflicted at theſe ſort of Sins, and above all for hindring thoſe whom he has ſet ſo bad a Pattern from ſinning after his Example, and for retrieving them from their Sin, if through his fault they have been already drawn into it. In the other Caſe, He is to make amends for the Scandal he has given the Church, which can be done only by ſhewing publickly that he is ſincerely and humbly Penitent. This was the Practice of the Firſt Chriſtians, and it was exactly conformable to the Spirit of the Goſpel. It is clear that ſcandalous Sinners, and amongſt others the Unclean, teſtifying by their Converſation that they are no true Chriſtians, and ſeparating themſelves from the Communion of *Jeſus Chriſt*, as S. *Paul* ſpeaks, 1 *Cor.* 6. are not therefore to be looked upon as true Members of the Church, till they change their courſe of Life, and beg to be reſtored to the Communion from which they have departed. Thus by the bye it appears, what Notions we ſhould have of Publick Penance. Divers account of it as a Puniſhment

and

and Correction executed upon Sinners, which it is not: It is on the contrary a Favour that is granted them. And hence it was that in the Primitive Church, the Penitents entreated this Favour with Tears, and a great deal of Earneſtneſs. But this holy Practice is now aboliſhed in many Places; and it is very rarely that either Excommunication or Penance is made uſe of in relation to the Impure.

Which obliges me to add one Conſideration more, with reſpect to thoſe who commit this Sin in places where Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline is grown into diſuſe; and that is, that they muſt not be careleſs and ſecure upon Pretence that they are not liable to the Laws and Duties of Penance; nor ſuffer themſelves to be prevailed upon by the Liberty that is allowed them of coming to the Holy Myſteries, and enjoying all the Privileges of the External Members of the Church. They ſhould bethink themſelves, that neither the Badneſs of the Times, nor the Oppoſition of Men, nor the Cuſtoms and Laws eſtabliſhed by thoſe in Authority, can alter the Laws of Chriſt. Excommunication is not the leſs of Divine Right, for being grown out of uſe. If egregious Sinners are not excommunicated by Men, they are however in the ſight of God; they have cut themſelves off from Jeſus Chriſt by their diſorderly Life; they have broken the Communion they had with the Saints by ſcandalizing them. So that whatſoever Judgment Men make of them, they ought to judge and condemn themſelves, and look upon themſelves as ſeparated from their Saviour. Let them therefore be very wary how they approach his Table after the commiſſion of this Sin, but let them abſtain for a time, and let them groan by themſelves in private; and if their Fault be known, let them give publick Signs

of a profound Humiliation and Repentance. These are the Advices proper to be given to the Guilty, and which they ought to follow as they would secure their own Salvation. This is what might be said upon this Subject in the mean time, till it shall please God in his good Providence to re-settle Discipline in the Church, and Princes, Magistrates, and People, shall all submit to the Laws of Christ.

2. Besides this general Duty, there is another more particular, and that is to Repair the Injury which has been done to, and provide for the Salvation of, the Person with whom this Wickedness has been committed. For this Sin putting two Persons at the same time into a State of Damnation, it is evident that whether one has been solicited, or has solicited the other, he is obliged to procure by all ways possible, the Conversion of that other with whom he has been engaged in this Crime. This is an important Article, but which is very little thought of. Far from this, the Impure oftentimes put the greatest Impediments in the way of their Accomplices Repentance, and employ all their Art to immerse them deeper in their Guilt. As all those do who tempt them to conceal their Fault by Lying, and making false Declarations, and entice them to use other unlawful means to prevent the Truth's being brought to Light.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

The Fourth Duty of the Unclean, Converſion.

THE Fourth Duty of ſuch who are chargeable with this Sin is Converſion and Amendment; which is to be wrought by theſe Four Steps.

I. Firſt to forſake their Sin, and continue no longer in it. When our bleſſed Saviour pardoned the Woman taken in Adultery, he ſaid to her, * *Go and ſin no more.* The Crime muſt therefore be totally Renounced; and they which do not this, but relapſe into it, have not Repented of it. Every Act, and every Repetition of their Sin, is an Aggravation of both their Guilt and Puniſhment. This is ſo eaſily comprehended, that there will be no occaſion to ſhew it more at large. * S. Jo. 8. 11.

II. But this is but the Beginning of Converſion; and this firſt Step will be to no purpoſe if the Offenders ſtop here. It is not enough to renounce their Crime, without renouncing likewiſe all the Approaches to it, all the ſeveral Species of Impurity, and all the Defilements of either Body or Mind; all lewd Actions, wanton Glances, impure Thoughts and Deſires, together with ſuch Familiarities as expoſe to Temptation, all obſcene Diſcourſe or Expreſſions, and which are contrary to Chaſtity. It is true this Renunciation may appear Difficult at firſt, and will occaſion no ſmall Trouble, to thoſe that have contracted a vicious Habit of giving themſelves up to all ſorts of Paſſions. But People muſt couragiouſly reſolve to overcome themſelves, it being far better to deny themſelves in ſome things, and to croſs

their own Inclinations than to periſh eternally. † *It is profitable for them that one of their Members ſhould periſh; and not that their whole Body ſhould be caſt into Hell-fire.* Moreover, the Difficulty that is herein is of no long Continuance; and I ſhall ſhew that it is not too great to be overcome.

† S. Mat. 5. 29.

There are two Reaſons, why it is neceſſary to renounce all theſe Species of Impurity. Firſt becauſe they will be apt to make Men fall again into the Crime. And then becauſe a true Repentance is inconſiſtent with Defilement. The Soul is not changed, whilſt it is not pure, but preſerves a Kindneſs for theſe filthy and ſhameful Paſſions. The Soul and the Body are polluted by unchaſt Deſires and Actions. In a word, whereſoever there is any love of Sin, there is no true Reformation.

By this Rule any one may know that there are many falſe and hypocritical Converſions. Many abſtain from the Crime and renounce it, who in the mean time are neither chaſt in Body, nor in Heart. Their Soul is always full of laſcivious Deſires and Imaginations; they are diſſolute in their Actions and in their Speech; they give themſelves a full Liberty, and ſatisfy themſelves in every thing but only the very Crime. This is an evident Mark of Corruption, and Impenitence; and they may aſſure themſelves that it is only upon worldly Conſiderations, they do not deliver themſelves up to the utmoſt Exceſſes.

III. It ſuffices not barely to fly Impurity, but in the Third Place, they muſt ſhew forth their Repentance by a Life of Mortification, partly for the ſatisfaction of thoſe who have been ſcandalized at them, and partly for defending themſelves againſt Temptations and Relapſes. It being the Fleſh that has put them upon ſinning, it is but reaſonable that this be tamed by Severity and

and Faſting. The carnal Appetite, and love of Pleaſures and worldly Joy, muſt be brought into ſubjection. A Man muſt in token of his Humiliation, and by way of Prevention for the future, mortify himſelf in all things, and eſpecially in thoſe he has moſt kindneſs for, and where they are not expreſly forbidden him. If it be a general Doctrine among Chriſtians, * *not to take care of the Fleſh,* † to mortify the Body, or *to keep it under and bring it into ſubjection,* none has more reaſon for the Obſervance of theſe Injunctions, than thoſe whom the Paſſions of the Fleſh have drawn into Sin. A Love of Pleaſures, and Compliance with the Fleſh are no where more highly blameable, than in ſuch as are guilty of Impurity. And it muſt alſo be granted that when any one is touched with a lively Senſe of this Crime, he goes no longer in queſt of theſe vain Delights, he is not then in a Condition to rejoyce and pleaſe himſelf, but places his Conſolation rather in the Exerciſes of Repentance. Diverſions and frivolous Entertainments, reading vain Authors, Dreſſing, and the care of the Body, all theſe make but faint Impreſſions on him. And no leſs on the contrary, when thoſe that have been Impure, and Diſſolute, and who have left off to ſin as they have grown into Years, do not mortifie themſelves, when they love their Eaſe, and make it their ſtudy to obtain the Pleaſures and Advantages of Life, paſſing their Time in Idleneſs, or at Play, and ſetting their Minds upon Dainties and ſumptuous Entertainments, moſt certainly theſe are yet in a ſtate of Impenitence, and have never been truly ſenſible of their Fault, nor duly ſet themſelves to make amends for it.

* Rom. 13. 14.
† 1 Cor. 9. 27.

IV. In the laſt place, The ſincerity of a Sinner's Converſion muſt appear not only in the things

wh'ch have relation to Impurity, but in the whole courſe of his Converſation. So great a Fall ſhould render a Man wiſe, pious, circumſpect, in all things. All that is in him is to become new. He ſhould take occaſion from every thing to ſhew his Repentance, to diſcharge his Duty towards God, to edify his Neighbour, and to purify himſelf more and more. He ought with great exactneſs and ſincerity to practiſe the Duties of Religion, to give himſelf to Meditation, and Prayer, and to be conſtant in holy Exerciſes. He ought to do all the good Works he ſhall be able, and eſpecially to employ his Goods to the Uſes of Piety and Charity, following the Counſel of the Prophet *Daniel*, † *Redeeming their Sins by Alms, and their Iniquities by ſhewing Mercy to the Poor.* In one word, He ſhould be ſure to neglect nothing of all that may evidence a ſincere Converſion.

† Dan. 4. 27.

See here one way whereby to diſtinguiſh betwixt a true and a falſe Repentance; and how a great part of the World deceive themſelves. The Guilty of Laſciviouſneſs think it enough to leave that Sin; yet they ſtick not at others, and their Converſation is very diſorderly upon many accounts. Now to what purpoſe is it to lay aſide one Sin, and take up others in its room? This alone is an abundant proof that ſuch have never truly Repented; What they call a Reformation being only an Exchange of one Paſſion for another. He that lived in Senſuality has left off his wonted Extravagances, becauſe Age has cooled his Paſſion, or elſe he is Married and has a Family to provide for, or is in an eminent Poſt, or ſuch other Circumſtances as require him to live regularly, and ſuffer him not to follow his own Inclinations. But he is not at all the better Man for this; but is ſtill Covetous, or Ambitious, or a Swearer,

Swearer, or an Incendiary, or an † Uſurer, or a Drunkard. It is very uſual after People have ſpent their Youth in Pleaſures, to devote the remainder of their Life to Ambition and Covetouſneſs. Yet all the while they impoſe upon themſelves, and will by all means believe that they are well amended, becauſe they do not go on in the ſame Sins they had practiſed formerly. They do not now commit the ſame Sins they did in their younger Years, but yet they commit others inſtead of them that they were not then acquainted with. Wherein there is ſo little Amendment that it is rather an Enhancement of their Condemnation, as being an addition of Sin to Sin. And yet after this Manner do a great number of Perſons become ſucceſſively Slaves to theſe three Paſſions, Pleaſure, Pride, and Avarice. Beſides abundance of others in whom none of theſe Paſſions is extinct, but they reign all at once, and though grown into Years they are nevertheleſs impure, ambitious, and miſerably addicted to their Intereſt. I conclude therefore that there muſt be a general Reformation. If a Man be a real Penitent, he will ſhew this in his whole Converſation, in his outward Deportment, in his Diſcourſe, in his Employment, in his Family, if he has one, and in all his Affairs; throughout the whole his Management will be according to the Rules of the exacteſt Juſtice, and the Dictates of a tender Conſcience. This is the Character of a true Penitent.

† This I take to intend one that is very griping and unreaſonable in his Demands; ſince if all it means were only one that takes a moderate Intereſt for Money, ſuch a Practice though forbidden amongſt the *Jews* to thoſe of their own Nation, will however be very hardly proved unlawful amongſt Chriſtians, our Bleſſed Saviour having nowhere condemned it in his Goſpel. As has been fully proved not only by *Salmaſius* and Others formerly, but by a learned Writer to whom our Author himſelf appeals upon another Occaſion. Mr. *La Placette*, *Second Traité ſur des Matieres de Conſcience*

And thus I have ſhewn what are the Duties of thoſe who have fallen into the Sins of Impurity. But as I have ſaid, they are not ſo appropriated to the guilty of the Crime, but that all others who, though free from the Crime, are not yet every way pure and chaſt, may and ought to apply them to themſelves.

Happy are the Guilty that diſcharge theſe Duties aright, who with the ſinful Woman in St. *Luke's* Goſpel, weep bitterly for their Faults, who have confeſſed them, and made Reparation for them, and have renounced and forſaken them! * *Their Sins, though great, ſhall be forgiven them.* Theſe are by no means to be deſpiſed. For there is a great deal of Love and Tenderneſs due to all Sinners, but more eſpecially to ſuch as forſake their wicked ways, and cauſe *Joy in Heaven* by their Return. And it would be a great Sin to reject thoſe whom God has taken into his Favour.

* St. Lu. 7. 47.

But what ſhall we ſay of Sinners that neglect theſe Duties, and continue in their Pollution and their Crime? How ſad a ſtate muſt that Man be in, who not only feels his Conſcience accuſing him of this Sin, but who beſides has taken no care to make amends for it, and who, miſerable Wretch as he is, heaps Sin upon Sin, and Crime upon Crime? But above all, what can be thought of thoſe who, laden with their Sins, live however in Security? How is it they are ſo blind as not to ſee into what a deplorable Condition they have brought themſelves? Or whence is it they are ſo eaſy under theſe Circumſtances? How and in what manner do they hope to end their Lives? Can they promiſe themſelves to obtain the Pardon of their Sins, before they leave this World? I entreat, I beſeech, I conjure them to enquire what Ground they have to flatter themſelves with any ſuch Hope. I beg of them to reflect upon what

what they have read, but withal to do it very ſeriouſly, for after all it is what deſerves to be well conſidered. It is not their Buſineſs to drive theſe Thoughts from their Mind, and live like Beaſts, letting looſe the Reins to their Senſuality, and hardening themſelves in their Guilt, and ſo to go down unconcernedly to the Grave. This is the utmoſt height of Blindneſs and Brutality; in as much as Death is every day drawing nearer, after which every one muſt enter upon an Eſtate from whence there is no Returning.

If to obtain the Pardon of this Sin, the Duties I have mentioned are neceſſarily to be performed, it ſeems to me plainly to follow, their Hope is every way groundleſs and deceitful, who put off their Converſion, and yet promiſe themſelves to find Favour with God at the end of their Life. For Death may ſnatch away the Sinner without allowing him time to bewail his Sin. But admitting his Circumſtances to be ſuch as will allow him time for Reflection; what ſort of Reflections will he make, when his Conſcience ſhall ſet before him the Miſcarriages of his Life, and ſhall eſpecially reproach him for thoſe Sins which draw others after them, and for which he ought to have made Reparation. Oh the miſerable ſtate, will he ſay to himſelf, whereto I find myſelf reduced! Oh that whilſt I was in Health, and had Time allowed me, I had taken care to clear my Conſcience! But I have perſevered in my Sins, I have added one Provocation to another, I have put Obſtructions in the way to my Repentance; and have brought myſelf to that paſs, that I know neither how to confeſs, nor how to make amends for them. And now at length I am come to my laſt Day, I am laid upon that Bed from whence I ſhall riſe no more, but muſt go to appear before my God, and thither ſhall I carry into his Preſence a guilty Conſcience,

ſcience, a Body and a Soul polluted and laden with Filth. Now things appear with much another Countenance than they had formerly. Now Terrors and Remorſe begin to ſhew themſelves, and the Sinner is ſeized with horrible Anguiſh. Now he would make Reſtitution. Now he condemns himſelf for having deceived a Parent, and done Injury to the Children. Now he would crave the Prieſt's Advice, and would fain learn how to ſet his Conſcience at eaſe. But it is now too late, he has no more time left, he is dying, and has already loſt his Strength and Underſtanding.

I am well aware that Man muſt not pretend to ſet bounds to Divine Mercy; nor exclude a Sinner from Pardon upon condition he be touched with a lively and unfeigned Repentance, and which proceeds not meerly from a fear of Death; ſuppoſing alſo that he in good truth does all he is able to confeſs and make amends for his Sin, and gives all the Tokens poſſible of a ſincere Repentance, not being withheld from it by Shame, or any worldly Conſideration whatſoever. But beſides that this is a very uncomfortable manner of a Chriſtians ending his Life, and he will meet with a great deal of diſſatisfaction in it; it is farther to be remembred that there are very few, that after a Life of Senſuality, end their days with a ſaving Repentance, eſpecially amongſt thoſe who have committed ſuch Faults as have need of Confeſſion and Reparation, and have endeavoured by one Sin to conceal another. Some have been racked and tortured upon their Death-bed with theſe dire Reflections: And ſome being called upon and exhorted to confeſs and make amends for their Sins, whereof they have been publickly accuſed, and of which they were certainly guilty, but yet had ſolemnly proteſted themſelves innocent, have died without ever being brought to own the Truth.

Truth. When Men have made theſe advances towards the concealing their Wickedneſs, it is very rarely that they will recede from them; but they will chooſe rather to damn themſelves through a falſe Shame and point of Honour.

Whence it appears that all who abandon themſelves to the Crime, caſt themſelves into an Abyſs of Miſeries. A dreadful State indeed! No wiſe Man ſure would ever knowingly bring himſelf into ſuch cruel Perplexities; it is ſo eaſy, and ſo reaſonable to prevent it by diſcharging his Conſcience, and doing as he ought. How then ought ye to enter upon theſe Reflections, all you that have contracted a Habit of Licentiouſneſs. You are called to do it now; and if ye do it not, you will one day bewail and deteſt your own brutiſh Security. No doubt you perſuade yourſelves that you ſhall never be ſo unhappy, and that you ſhall have better Sentiments hereafter; but the longer you ſhall expect, the worſe you will find it with you; the longer you ſhall live, the more unwilling you will be to take up a Reſolution that you will not be invited to at preſent. Your Return to God is not the work of a Moment; but there is need of Time to free yourſelves from the Bonds and Snares whereinto Men are brought by Incontinence, to make amends for your Sin; to root out evil Habits, and to purify the Heart. To be informed of all which Truths, and not to make a good uſe of them, is but to run upon Deſtruction, and prepare for yourſelves an extremely doleful End.

Theſe Conſiderations are alſo offered you, who are yet in the Age of Youth. Be affected with them, and hearken rather to the Voice of God and the Counſels of Wiſdom than to your own Paſſions. You are young, you are in Health, you put from you the thoughts of a Reformation, but you

you are haſtening continually towards Death, and may be ſurprized by it much ſooner than you imagine. Wherefore reckon not upon the time to come; nor flatter yourſelves that you ſhall be converted when Age ſhall have worn off your impure Paſſions. The Flames of Impurity burn even in thoſe of elder Years; and if they dye away in ſome, thoſe of other Paſſions are kindled in them. There is too much Danger in ſuffering ourſelves to be ſurprized by the Temptations of Voluptuouſneſs; but much more in wilfully delivering ourſelves up to them, in deſpite of all the Admonitions we meet with to the contrary. From one Sin People paſs on to another, and ſo their Habits come to be confirmed; they ſin, and think of nothing but hiding their Sin whatſoever it coſt them, till at length they find themſelves in an Eſtate out of which there is no Recovery; becauſe they can no more reſolve to do what is neceſſary for the diſcharge of their Conſcience. Bleſſed therefore is he that waits not till Death to amend his Faults! But much more bleſſed he, whoſe Youth is chaſt, and always kept within Bounds! His Life cannot fail of being Pure, or his Death of being Happy.

Here I conclude the former part of this Work, in which I have propounded to treat of Uncleanneſs. I ſhall now proceed to the other, wherein I am to diſcourſe of Chaſtity.

The End of the Former Part.

PART II.

OF

CHASTITY.

VICE and Virtue being two Oppoſites, in keeping at a diſtance from the One, we by this means approach the Other. And ſo Chaſtity being the oppoſite Virtue to Uncleanneſs, what has been hitherto diſcourſed of that Vice, has a natural tendency to render Perſons Chaſt. Yet not ſo fully but that it will be requiſite to treat alſo of Chaſtity in particular. And the rather becauſe this Virtue is not throughly underſtood; a great part of Mankind not knowing the Nature and Duties of it; few apprehending what is to be done in order to it; and fewer yet being willing to be at the Pains of acquiring it. My Deſign therefore in the Second Part of this Work is to ſpeak of Chaſtity, and to ſhew theſe three things. Firſt, what Chaſtity is; Secondly, what are the Motives to it; and thirdly, what Means are to be made uſe of in order to our being Chaſt. The firſt of which Articles will explain the Nature of this Duty; the next will invite to practiſe it; and the laſt will render the Practice of it eaſy.

SECTION

SECTION I.

CHAP. I.

Of Chaſtity in General.

CHaſtity is a preſervation of ourſelves both Souls and Bodies pure and exempt from the Pollution of Uncleanneſs. St. *Paul* deſcribes it in theſe terms, 1 *Theſ.* IV. 3, 4. *This is the Will of God, that ye ſhould abſtain from Fornication; that every one of you ſhould know how to poſſeſs his Veſſel in Sanctification and Honour.* Whereby he firſt ſhews that Chaſtity conſiſts in abſtaining from Uncleanneſs, and preſerving the Body pure. For this term of *Veſſel*, or * Inſtrument, ſignifies the Body, which is as a Veſſel wherein the Soul dwells, or as an Inſtrument by the help of which it executes its Deſigns. St. *Paul* ſpeaks of the Body, becauſe Uncleanneſs is properly a Sin of the Body and Fleſh, as is ſaid 1 *Cor.* 6. 18. and *Rom.* 1. 24. But though the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the Body, Chaſtity concerns the Mind alſo. The truth is, the Apoſtle would have us poſſeſs our Bodies in Purity; but we cannot keep our Bodies pure without the help of the Mind. It is the Soul's Buſineſs to guard the Body, to govern it, and keep it in ſubjection; and it belongs not to the Body to have dominion over the Soul. When a Man follows the Motions of the Body, then the Body guides the Soul and drags it along; it is the Fleſh that rules, and the Soul is become its Slave. But when † *through the Spirit we mortify the Deeds*

* *So the Word ſeems to be uſed* Act. 9. 15.

† Rom. 8. 14.

Deeds and Passions *of the Body*, as St. *Paul* speaks, then the Body is brought into subjection, and the Soul preserves its Authority over it, as in reason it ought. It is plain therefore that Chastity respects both Body and Mind, and that it consists in the Purity of both the One and the Other of these Parts of ourselves. As is implied in these Words of St. *Paul*, wherein he gives a Description of one who lives in entire Chastity. ‖ *The unmarried Woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in Body and in Spirit.* ‖ 1 Cor. 7. 34.

11. But the Apostle teaches that to keep our Bodies pure, it is not enough to refrain from all unlawful and immodest Behaviour, and abstain from Impurity; but there is something more than this required, and these Words *to keep the Body in* Holiness, or *Sanctification, and Honour*, import that we are to use them purely, and to employ them to holy Purposes, worthy of that Christianity we make Profession of, and acceptable in the sight of God. This is the general Notion a Man should form to himself of Chastity.

CHAP. II.

Of the First Branch of Chastity, with respect to what is forbidden.

BUT to give a more distinct Character of Chastity, it contains two general Duties. The former of which respects the Government of our Lives as to things forbidden, the other as to things allowed us.

To begin with the former of these Duties, we must observe there are four Degrees of Chastity. The First is an Abstinence from the Crime; the Se-

Second is a Refraining from other Impure Actions; the Third is a Resistance of evil Desires; and the Fourth is an Exemption from, or Mastery over them.

I. The First Duty of Chastity is to renounce the Crimes of Uncleanness, such as Adultery and Fornication; as is plain from the Words of St. *Paul* 1 *Thess.* IV. 3, 4. recited in the foregoing Chapter. Every one easily perceives that this is the first degree of Chastity; this is so manifest, it needs only to be hinted. But however there are two Inferences proper to be mentioned in this place. First, if to abstain from the Crime be the first Degree of Chastity, then is it the lowest Step or Degree of it; and this alone that a Man is not plunged into the Crime, is neither the Effect of true Virtue, nor the Subject of any great Praise. Secondly, We must beware of accounting all those chast who are free from the Crimes of Uncleanness. It must be enquired upon what grounds they refrain from them; because if it be only for want of Ability, or because they dare not gratify their brutish Passion for fear of exposing themselves to some worldly Disadvantage, there is no Chastity in this, nor will they be reputed innocent before God. Those only are chast, who have abstained from the Crime out of a Principle of Virtue and Piety. And accordingly as this Principle is more or less powerful, so is Chastity more or less advanced.

They who shun the Crime out of an unfeigned Fear of displeasing God, but yet with Difficulty and Conflicts, have together with their vicious Inclinations some measure of Chastity; but those have carried their Virtue to a great height, who have such an Abhorrence of the Crime, as to find themselves under no Temptation to the commission of it. It was by this that *Joseph* deserved the Praise of a consummate Chastity, when being solicited

licited to the Crime, expoſed to a moſt inſinuating Temptation, and this in an Age, and in other Circumſtances the moſt capable that might be of enticing one not firmly addicted to Virtue, he reſiſted this Temptation, he reſiſted it divers times, and at laſt rejected it with Deteſtation and Horror; ſaying, * *How can I do this great Wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?* * Gen. This Victory obtained over the Temptation preſents us with an Inſtance of an accompliſhed Chaſtity, and which includes in it the other Degrees of this Virtue. But all that abſtain from the Crime are not arrived at this meaſure of Purity; they do not all reject the Temptation with this firm, ready, and generous Reſolution, which not only cauſes a Man to heſitate, but ſhews him to be ſmitten with Horror at the firſt appearance of the Crime. However they do refrain; and do it becauſe witheld by a Principle of Religion and Conſcience. This is the firſt Degree of Chaſtity. 39. 9.

II. But to proceed. This Duty of Chaſtity implies in it an Abſtinence from all impure Actions, whether unchaſt in themſelves, or only conducing to what may defile. I have noted in the former part of this Treatiſe ſome Actions that are prejudicial to Chaſtity, and have laid down ſome Rules whereby they may be diſtinguiſhed. And it ſhall therefore ſuffice in this place only to obſerve, that it is the part of Chaſtity neither to do nor ſay any thing that is immodeſt, but to be very pure and very circumſpect in both Actions and Words, that nothing that is diſſolute or too wanton may eſcape us. Chaſtity governs the Hands and the whole Body, that none touch themſelves, or others, or ſuffer themſelves to be touched in too free and indecent a manner. Chaſtity governs the Eyes, and cauſes to withdraw them from ſuch Objects or Writings as might ſeduce the Heart, that we never read nor look at what may tend to excite impure

Thoughts. This Virtue is also a profest Enemy to Luxury and Immodesty in Cloathing, and teaches a grave and inoffensive Carriage, and banishes vain Discourse, foolish Mirth, and excessive and scandalous Diversions. Lastly, this Virtue when once well settled in the Heart, makes a Man exact and cautious in all these Particulars, and to keep his Body and his Senses under great Restraint.

III. The Third Degree of Chastity is a Resistance of those Thoughts and Motions of the Soul which tend to Impurity. These kind of Thoughts seduce Persons, when they raise such Lusts in them as obtain their Desire, and the full Consent of their Will, or when they barely entertain them in their Minds, but so as to take pleasure in them. Both which are contrary to Chastity. And the chast Man therefore is one who not only allows not himself to be transported by irregular Motions, nor only just forbears the Desire of the Crime, but who does not pollute himself with the simple Thoughts of the Pleasure, and with foolish and impure Imaginations, but rejects and repels these Thoughts. Then a Man has attained to this Virtue, when he has learned to be Master of his own Heart, and to keep his Thoughts and Desires in subjection. When the Objects that present themselves, or the Discourse we hear, or the Imagination or Memory raise up sensual Thoughts or Ideas, a chast Person will not allow them to enter the Heart, or so much as to come near it. This is one of the great and principal Duties of Chastity, to resist those Motions of the Soul which tend to Lust, so as that if a Man unhappily feel such Motions in himself, he studies to repress them, and at least to prevent their becoming Voluntary.

IV. Lastly, There is a Fourth Degree of Chastity, which is the highest of all, and that is to be entirely,

entirely, or at leaſt very near exempt from theſe Thoughts and Deſires I have been ſpeaking of. It has been obſerved upon this Occaſion, that there is a difference between Continence and Chaſtity. The former of theſe Vertues is ſaid to conſiſt in containing ourſelves, and refraining when we find ourſelves ſolicited to Evil; that it is a Reſiſting the ſenſual Motions that ariſe in the Soul, and keeping the Paſſions in order, which ſuppoſes a Perſon to be tempted, and that he is not chaſt without ſome ſtruggle and conflict. But as to the other it is ſaid that a Man has attained to true Chaſtity, when he is free from evil Deſires, and the Rebellion of his Paſſions, without being expoſed to any conflict with them. It was S. *Jerom*'s Saying, * that *He who is Continent is in the way of Vertue, but is not yet arrived at the top of it, in as much as the Deſires of the Fleſh ſpring up in the Soul of him that contains himſelf, and pollute his Soul, though they do not prevail over, and draw him into the Crime.* But this Article has need of ſome farther Illuſtration.

For it is queſtioned whether there is a poſſibility of being exempt from impure Thoughts and Deſires, and whether any have attained to that paſs as to take no Pleaſure in Thoughts that tend to Impurity, ſo as to have no Senſe of any vicious Motion in their Soul with reſpect to this Sin. For my own part I doubt not but this State may be attained to, and that there are Perſons to whom Almighty God has vouchſafed this Favour; and eſpecially amongſt thoſe who from their Youth,

* *Hieron.* in *Gal.* cap. V, Continentia in viâ quidem virtutis eſt, ſed nec dum pervenit ad calcem; quia cupiditates adhuc in ejus qui ſe continet cogitatione naſcuntur, & mentis polluunt principale, licet non ſuperent, nec ad opus pertrahant cogitantem.

together with a happy Constitution, and good Education, have had a solid Piety and a large share of Modesty and abhorrence of this Vice, and have always kept themselves at a distance from it. The greater Progress any one makes in Chastity, and the more rarely wanton Thoughts disturb him, the more they lose of their force; and there is no reason why it may not be believed that there are some who have them not; and that what is a Temptation to others, is to these no more than as a Spark that lights in the Water, or an Arrow shot against a Rock.

I will add something here concerning Sleep. A chast Person is so when he is asleep. Men are ordinarily such in the Night, and in their Dreams, as they are in the Day-time. I speak not of what is involuntary and purely natural. The Constitution of the Body, and the Imagination may produce unusual and strange Effects in Sleep and Dreams; but Chastity is not impaired by this, provided there be nothing of the Will in it, and that a Person do not give occasion for it, but all the time he is awake endeavours a great Purity. Moreover impure Dreams and Fancies, and disorderly Motions, are a sign that the Flesh is not yet brought into subjection. These are the Fruits either of a vicious Inclination to Sensuality, or of Intemperance in Eating or Drinking, or of a Memory and Imagination filled with sensual Ideas, and impure Objects. I have touched this Point concerning Sleep in very few Words; but there is a great deal included in them, that deserves larger and serious Reflexions.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the Second Branch of Chaſtity, with reſpect to what is Lawful.

TEmperance preſcribes Rules not only with reſpect to things forbidden and ſinful, but likewiſe to things allowed and lawful; and if we are obliged wholly to abſtain from the one, ſo are we not always to make uſe of the other. This latter Duty is of very great Importance, and calls for our particular Conſideration.

For Men are more eaſily drawn to ſin in things allowed, than in thoſe forbidden. In regard to theſe latter, the knowledge of their being forbidden keeps many in awe; but in things allowed the moſt part obſerve no Rule, but think themſelves free to uſe their utmoſt Liberty; and ſo deſtroy Vertue and Piety; it being impoſſible in this Caſe not to paſs from what is permitted to what is forbidden. A thing may be allowed to a certain degree, and in ſome Circumſtances only; but how few contain themſelves within theſe Bounds, and do not proceed farther than they ought? It is ſlippery treading here, and there is infinite Danger in being willing always to have our fill of things allowed. By ſatisfying our Deſires in theſe things the Paſſions get ſuch Dominion over us, that we ſhall not be able to refuſe them any thing; and ſo by pleaſing ourſelves with what is allowed, ſhall be carried on to what is not. Beſides Perſons ſhould ſtint themſelves in things allowed, leſt by being wont conſtantly to pleaſe themſelves, they come to be enſlaved to their Paſſions. It is eſſential to Piety and Vertue

to mortify the Will and bring it into ſubjection. But eſpecially Care ſhould be taken and great Circumſpection uſed in thoſe things which are pleaſant and delightful, and ſo become ſtrong Temptations. Though a Man ſhould never venture upon what is unlawful, too great an Affection for ſenſible things, and too ready a Compliance with the bent of our own Will, will not eaſily conſiſt with true Piety; it will make the Heart too fond of the World and its Enjoyments, and will neceſſarily abate its Love of God, and its Diligence in ſeeking after the heavenly Treaſures, and that ſubmiſſion, which all are to pay to the Divine Will. Which ſhews it to be a Maxim in the Chriſtian Ethicks, that things Lawful are not to be abuſed. *All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient,* 1 Cor. 10. 23.

To apply this to our preſent Subject, it is obſervable that Temperance lays down two Rules in reſpect to lawful things; never to uſe them but with Moderation; and ſometimes wholly to refrain from them. When we ſpeak of Chaſtity there is but one thing permitted, and that is Marriage; and we muſt therefore take notice of two Degrees of Chaſtity in this reſpect; 1ſt, A Care not to abuſe this State; 2dly, An entire Renunciation of it.

I. In the firſt place we muſt be ſure not to abuſe it. Marriage is common to all the People in the World; but it will by no means become Chriſtians, who know it is a holy State inſtituted by God, to enter into, and live in it after a ſenſual manner, as the Pagans do, and thoſe Nations who have never been bleſſed with the Light of the Goſpel. Here therefore are two Duties to be attended to, to enter upon it purely, and to live purely in it.

1. Mar-

1. Marriage being a holy Society, Chriſtians are to enter into it holily and with Reverence, and to order their Converſation in it, not according to the Directions of the Fleſh and Senſes, but according to thoſe of Reaſon and Religion. That general Rule of the Apoſtle, who orders † *all things to be done in the Name of the Lord Jeſus,* is more eſpecially to be put in practice upon this occaſion, as being one of the moſt important affairs of our whole Life. And it is not therefore without great reaſon that the uſage of beginning Marriage with Acts of Religion has been eſtabliſhed in the Church. As indeed it had alſo been among the Heathens. Chriſtians ſhould always perform this Office ſo as that they may be able to aſſure themſelves our Lord Chriſt is preſent with them, and ſanctifies them by his Bleſſing. But Piety has commonly little to do in Marriages; and though the Church's Bleſſing, and Prayer are uſed at them, theſe ſolemn Devotions are not attended to, nor looked upon otherwiſe than as a Formality. Marriage is often no better than the effect of ſenſuality; This Eſtate ſo holy in it ſelf is with many people only as a Cover for their Shame. They marry to avoid Diſgrace, and upon force, becauſe of the ill conſequents of their impure manner of Life. Such Marriages are rather a continued Impurity veiled under a creditable Name, than a chaſt and Chriſtian Ordinance. Not to ſay any thing here of the ſtrange Licentiouſneſs and Diſſoluteneſs that accompanies theſe Weddings, and the fooliſh, immodeſt, and ſcandalous Merriment which is uſual upon theſe Occaſions. Which things conſidered it is not to be wondered, that ſo many Matches ſucceed no better; that ſuch as marry not out of a wiſe and reaſonable Affection, or an Eſteem founded upon Vertue, but upon ſome ſudden Paſſion, or Neceſſity, or to ſave their Ho-

† Coloſſ. 3. 17.

nour, do in a little time diſlike one another; that they agree very ill, that their Children are badly educated, and that they fall ſometimes into great Crimes.

2. The other Duty of Married Perſons is to live purely and free from Senſuality. The remains of Natural Light in the Heathens taught them that Marriage was to be chaſt and modeſt, and that every thing was not allowable in it. St. *Paul* ſhews what Notion we ſhould have of it, when he tells us ſuch as are coupled together by this ſacred Bond ſhou'd ſeparate themſelves ſometimes to betake themſelves to Faſting and Prayer. Theſe Rules which the Scripture lays down in regard to whatſoever concerns the Body, the World, and the Things of this Life, that † *all that is lawful may not be done at all times*, that * *Proviſion muſt not be made for the Fleſh to fulfil the Luſts thereof*, and that || *they that uſe this World are not to abuſe it*; theſe Rules, I ſay, reſpect Marriage likewiſe, and make it very clear that Perſons ought to live chaſtly in it. We may ſin, and that very grievouſly too, againſt Purity, in that Eſtate though lawful. Our Religion requires us to mortify our Paſſions, and above all our ſenſual Deſires. And therefore we muſt manage ourſelves ſo as may correct our Senſuality, but may by no means promote it. We muſt labour to become ſpiritual, not voluptuous and animal. In every Eſtate we muſt try to obtain ſuch a diſpoſition of Mind, as that we may apply ourſelves to what is well pleaſing to Almighty God, and may make us everlaſtingly happy. And if Marriage has been ordain'd as a Remedy againſt Uncleanneſs, we muſt not turn our Remedy into Poiſon. Thoſe that do ſo are highly culpable, and have enſnared themſelves by marrying. This Article is of ſingular importance, and affords matter for many Reflections, but it is one of thoſe that I am conſtrained to ſhorten.

† 1 Cor. 6. 12.
* Rom. 13. 14.
|| 1. Cor. 7. 31.

II. The

II. The second degree of Chastity with respect to what is lawful, is to renounce Marriage, and live in Celibacy. St. *Paul* comparing the State of the Married with that of the Unmarried, gives the Preference to the latter, as to a sort of Life, which frees a Man from many Inconveniences, Distractions, and Troubles, which attend Marriage, especially in times of Persecution. He says, * that † 1 Cor. *this Estate gives more Liberty for the Service of God*; 7. 33. that ‖ *the unmarried Woman careth for the things of the* ‖ v. 34. *Lord, that she may be holy both in Body and Spirit*; that ‡ *it was good for the unmarried to abide even as* ‡ v. 8. *himself*; and that * *he who gives not his Virgin in* * v. 38. *Marriage does better than he who gives her.* But then he speaks this only upon supposition of living chastly in Celibacy, and being inviolably continent; inasmuch where this is wanting, he declares ∴ *it* ∴ v. 9. *is better to marry than to burn.*

The Primitive Christians were likewise of the same Persuasion. They condemned not Marriage, no not in either Bishops or Presbyters; but yet they commended a single Life, and many amongst them of both Sexes chose to continue in it; though without ever obliging themselves by an irrevocable Vow to remain so all their Days. A forced Celibacy is a most dangerous State, and inevitably entangles Persons in a thousand Temptations, and terrible Miscarriages. I have already observed that the Law of Celibacy has been the Cause of infinite Irregularities; and that abundance of People live in Uncleanness, because they will not enter into a married State. Not but that Celibacy is assuredly a very happy State, where Continence is carefully preserved.

Here those who are not married ought to learn their Duty; nor can they be too studious of Purity. This is what the Younger Sort should above all things apply themselves to; their great Duty, the

the Mark they ſhould always have their Eye upon, being to preſerve Chaſtity. To this purpoſe they are to be vigilant and ſcrupulous as to whatever wounds this Virtue, and not to give themſelves any Liberty in this reſpect, conſidering the great Hazard there is in offering Violence to Chaſtity, and that the Breaches made here are rarely to be cured. He that is not chaſt in his younger Years, is ſure to feel either ſooner or later dreadful Conſequences of his Folly. There will continue ſad Remainders of it, its Ideas will return, the Fire will kindle again in his full Age, perhaps when he is grown old; and if he do not repent he is irrecoverably ruined; if he does repent, how is he forced to condemn and reproach himſelf? But on the other hand, Oh the Happineſs of ſuch an one who has kept himſelf pure from his Youth, and has never been acquainted with theſe corrupt Paſſions! How many other Delights does he meet with, beſides thoſe of ſenſual Pleaſure! Virtue is always lovely whereſoever it appears; but more eſpecially in young Perſons, it being highly commendable to follow its Precepts, in an Age wherein the heat of the Paſſions may be ſo eaſily blown up, and ſuch a Beginning promiſing moreover happy Fruits to follow through the ſeveral Stages of their Life. But of all the Virtues none ſhines in young Perſons more gloriouſly than Chaſtity and Continence. Nothing is more beautiful, nothing more worthy of Eſteem, or more acceptable in the ſight of God, than to be pure in Youth.

What I have ſaid to thoſe in Celibacy calls upon me to give ſome Direction to thoſe in Widowhood. For the ſame Duties are incumbent upon them, and they ought to be ſo much the more careful to preſerve themſelves chaſt, becauſe of their being more expoſed to Temptations, and

in

in more Danger of ſinking under them; becauſe Purity is a harder Task to thoſe that have been married, than if they had always continued ſingle. This chiefly concerns Widows, who are not to abuſe the Liberty which their Eſtate gives them, and the eaſineſs of ſatisfying their Paſſions, which they had not whilſt they were under the power of a Husband. No, their principal Care ſhould be to live in great Purity, and more than uſual Reſervedneſs, they muſt not content themſelves to abſtain from the Crime, and whatſoever is impure or unchaſt, but they muſt live prudently, modeſtly, and retiredly, and not ſeek after vain Ornaments, Pleaſures, Feaſts, and the Company and Converſation of thoſe of the other Sex. They muſt apply themſelves to the Education of their Children, if they have any, and to do good Works. Theſe are the Duties the holy Scripture enjoyns Chriſtian Widows; as may be ſeen in the Character given of them by St. *Paul*, 1 Tim. v. 5, 10. *She that is a Widow indeed truſteth in God, and continueth in Supplications and Prayers night and day; ſhe is well reported of for good Works, for having brought up Children, having lodged Strangers, having waſhed the Saints Feet, having relieved the Afflicted, and diligently followed every good Work.* See alſo what a Deſcription he gives of Widows that have abuſed their Eſtate by living in Pleaſure, *v.* 13. *They are idle, wandring about from Houſe to Houſe*; they are *Tatlers alſo and Buſy-bodies, ſpeaking things which they ought not.* He profeſſes likewiſe *v.* 6. that *Widows who live in Pleaſure, are dead while they live.* Than which nothing can be ſaid more expreſly to ſhew that Widows ought to live in Modeſty, Circumſpection, and great Purity.

SECTION

SECTION II.

Of the Motives to Chaſtity.

HAVING ſhewn the Nature of this Virtue of Chaſtity, I proceed now to the Motives which oblige us all to be chaſt. And the truth is, very powerful ones may be inferred from what has been hitherto diſcourſed. If we attend to what has been ſaid of Uncleanneſs, and all the Reaſons alledged for proving the Turpitude of this Vice; or to the Conſequences of it, and the Condition to which People are brought by it; the other Sins into which it draws them, and the Misfortunes to which it expoſes them; or to what is neceſſary in order to a Recovery out of it, and for making Amends for it, where it has been committed; or laſtly to what has been ſaid of Chaſtity, theſe are all ſo many powerful and preſſing Motives to this Virtue. But it is not my Deſign to go over theſe Conſiderations again, but only to preſent the Reader with the chief Motives we have to Chaſtity.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

The First Motive, The Nature of the Virtue.

I Take my first Argument for Chastity from the Nature of the Virtue it self; wherein I find three things that ought strongly to incite to the Practice of it, the Necessity, the Beauty, and the Easiness of it.

I. Chastity is a Virtue absolutely necessary. I do not stand to prove here that it is a Duty which Almighty God has most expressly required; because if we insist only upon the Nature of the Virtue itself, it must be owned to be of indispensable Necessity.

1. It is utterly impossible to practise the Christian Virtues without mortifying the Senses and the Inclinations of the Flesh; a fondness for the Passions and Pleasures of Sense being inconsistent with Virtue. This is so undoubted a Truth, that there is no need to have recourse to the Testimony of the Gospel for the proof of it. The Light of Nature teaches it; and each one's own Experience will convince him, that the progress any makes in the Practice of Virtue, bears a proportion to the Care he has taken to moderate his Passions. But this is also very evidently asserted in the Gospel. St. *Peter* admonishes, us that it † *is dangerous to follow the Lusts of the Flesh, and that they war against the Soul.* The holy Scripture represents the Flesh as the Cause of Sin, and the Spirit as the Principle of all Virtues. St. *Paul* declares these two to be plainly irreconcileable to each other; that the Inclinations of the Flesh are opposite to those of the Spirit, and

† 1 S. Pet. 2. 11.

that

that the motions of the Spirit are no less contrary to those of the Flesh. *The Flesh,* says the Apostle, *lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh, and these are contrary one to the other,* Gal. 5. 17. Which being the true state of the Case, one of them must necessarily yield to the other. Where the Flesh prevails those Christian Virtues which are the Fruits of the Spirit, such as *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance,* v. 22, 23. are made to give way. And where the Spirit governs those Sins which are the fruits of the Flesh such as *Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviousness, Idolatry, Strifes,* and the rest of the Sins the Apostle reckons up, *v.* 19, 20, 21. can no longer domineer. Whence we see the great and principal Advice Religion gives us is to resist the Flesh and its Desires, to crucify it, and to bring the Body into subjection; in a Word, to live after the Spirit, and not after the Flesh. And forasmuch as amongst all our fleshly Passions, there is none more violent than that which tempts to Impurity, nor that is attended with more dreadful Consequents, when it has got the mastery over the Heart, it follows from hence that this Passion is a grand Obstruction to Virtue, and by consequence, that one of our chief Duties is to keep it under. So that unless People can persuade themselves there is no necessity of being virtuous, or observing the Precepts of Religion, it must be granted that Chastity is absolutely necessary.

2. I add, this Virtue is so necessary, that there is no knowing how to love God, or to serve him without it. We are all bound to serve God, to pray to him, to give him Thanks, these being Duties all that have not renounc'd Religion readily agree to be of absolute Necessity. But bodily Pleasures are a Hindrance to the Performance of them; they extinguish Devotion, the Love of God,

God, and the Fervor of Prayer. To ſerve God and pray to him as we ought, we muſt be ſure to do it with Sincerity, Love, and Delight. But it is impoſſible to take delight in the ſpiritual Exerciſes of Devotion, whilſt a Man is poſſeſſed with a Love of carnal Pleaſures. The more devout any one is, the more nearly he is touched with the Love of God, and the more he has taſted of ſpiritual Pleaſures, thoſe raviſhing Delights which are to be found in Communion with God, the more is he affected with a hope of the Heavenly Glory; and the more indifferent he is towards ſenſual Pleaſures, the greater diſguſt he has of them. On the contrary, the more addicted one is to the Pleaſures of Senſe, the more does he ſeek after them; and the leſs reliſh he has for ſpiritual Pleaſures, the leſs diſpoſed he is for the Exerciſes of Devotion. For this I refer my ſelf to my Readers own Conſciences, and what they feel in themſelves, whether Whenever they begin to love the World paſſionately and immoderately, the Love of God doth not thenceforward decline in them? And yet what an unpardonable Affront is it to the holy and glorious God, the God who would make us happy, and give himſelf to us, to prefer vain, brutiſh, and tranſient Pleaſures before him?

3. It appears likewiſe that Chaſtity is of abſolute Neceſſity, that we may attain to that Salvation and Happineſs which Religion aims at. Such is the nature of the Heavenly Felicity, that without being chaſt, there is no poſſibility of ſeeking after it, reliſhing it, or poſſeſſing it. But I forbear to inſiſt upon this at preſent, deſigning it for the Subject of one of the following Chapters.

I preſume I have ſaid enough to ſhew that the Nature of Chaſtity itſelf, and the Relation it has to our other Duties, call loudly upon us to cultivate this Virtue, as we eſteem it neceſſary to be Reli-

Religious, and to use our Endeavours for obtaining another sort of Happiness than what our carnal Passions can furnish us with, during the short Stage of this Life.

II. What I next take notice of in this Virtue is its Beauty. St. *Paul* teaches this when he says, that *by this we keep our Vessel in Sanctification and Honour*, 1. Thes. iv. 4. By which Words he represents Chastity as fair, honourable, comely, and which makes an essential part of the Holiness to which we are called; whilst Impurity is in the mean time infamous and the Turpitude of it apparent by the very Light of Reason. But Chastity is most worthy of a Man, and does honour to and perfects his Nature, and disengages him from the Slavery of the Body and of Sense. A fondness for Pleasures is unbecoming one who has a spiritual and immortal Soul. Sensuality is a dull Passion, and debases the Soul, stupifies and renders it a Slave to the Body, and the more a Man is given to this Passion, the nearer he approaches to a Beast; as on the other hand, the greater Stranger he is to it, the more does he advance his Nature, and the more Care he takes of his Soul. But now if Chastity be worthy of a Man, much more lovely and more honourable is it in a Christian, who is devoted to God, and called to Holiness and Glory, and whose principal Character should be to have spiritual Inclinations,

† Col. 3. 1, 2. † *to seek the things that are above, and not those which are upon the Earth,* and in short, to be a ‖ spiritual and not a carnal Man. Upon this account it is that Chastity has been called an Angelick Virtue, because by it we resemble the Angels, and the state to which the blessed shall be advanced in the World to come; when, as our Saviour Christ says, * they shall be like those pure and glorious Spirits the Inhabitants of Heaven.

‖ Rom. 8. 6.

* St. Luke 20. 35, 36.

III. In

III. In the laſt place I mentioned the Eaſineſs that is to be met with in the Practice of Chaſtity. Virtue always brings its own Reward with it, by reaſon of the Compoſure of Mind and the Peace of Conſcience with which it is accompanied. This is the certain Effect of it, that by purifying the Soul it renders it alſo quiet and eaſy. St. *Peter* has declared of *fleſhly Luſts* that they * *war againſt the Soul.* And it is obvious to obſerve that Impurity raiſes in it Fear, Trouble, and Remorſe; but Chaſtity fills it with a ſettled Tranquillity and Peace. By denying himſelf the Entertainments which the Fleſh is wont to promiſe, a Man procures to himſelf infinite Joys; and by how much the ſtronger the Aſſaults of his Paſſion are, ſo much the more Pleaſure does he find in Reſiſting them. An inward Satisfaction follows cloſe upon a Victory over Temptations, a Man being always well pleaſed to come off Conqueror; but it muſt be confeſſed that he taſts moſt of this Peace and Satisfaction in reſiſting thoſe Temptations which invite by Pleaſure. The more the Sacrifice coſts, the more acceptable it is concluded to be with God. If herein a Man offer Violence to himſelf, he finds himſelf abundantly recompenced, and enjoys a Satisfaction which infinitely ſurpaſſes whatever could be had in following a ſhameful Inclination. And here again I refer my ſelf to the Experience every one may have had, and I beg of thoſe who ſhall read this to declare, whether when they have got the Maſtery over a Temptation, have turned away their Eyes from an alluring Object, and refuſed in any reſpect to gratify their Senſes, they have not preſently perceived an inward Peace and ſecret Satisfaction filling them with Conſolation and Joy. With what ſort of Comfort is the Soul then filled when it has reduced the Body to that condition, that its Tempta-

* St. Pet. 2. 11.

tions have loſt their force, and there is no more fear of the Revolt of Senſe, and the Aſſaults of this dangerous Paſſion! Then it enjoys a moſt delightful Calm, is delivered from a thouſand Dangers, and freely performs the Functions of the ſpiritual Life. And moreover in this ſtate of Peace and Purity, the God of Purity and of Peace communicates himſelf, in a moſt intimate and moſt comfortable manner.

CHAP. II.

The Second Motive, The Divine Will.

THE Second Motive to this Virtue is the Will and Command of Almighty God. There is no room for doubting whether God would have all be chaſt. We have already ſeen that he has declared his Mind moſt fully in his holy Word, and that there is no particular Sin oftener forbidden in the New Teſtament than Uncleanneſs. I ſhall mention in this place only thoſe Words of St. *Paul,* 1 Theſ. iv. 3, 4. *This is the Will of God, even your Sanctification, that ye ſhould obſtain from Fornication, that every one of you ſhould know how to poſſeſs his Veſſel in Sanctification and Honour.* As he had alſo ſaid before, *v.* 2. *Ye know what Commandments we gave you by the Lord Jeſus.* Which Words taken together intimate Chaſtity to be one of the principal Commands of the Goſpel, and an indiſpenſable Duty which God requires to be obſerved by all. Whereto may be added alſo the Promiſes made to thoſe who are chaſt, the Puniſhments denounced againſt the Impure, and the ſeveral Judgments which have been executed upon them from

from time to time. A ſufficient Proof of its being the Will of God that we live in Chaſtity.

And of what force ought this ſingle Motive to be, That it is the Will of God? We are undoubtedly all nearly concerned to ſubmit to whatſoever he enjoins. He has a ſovereign Authority over us, and we cannot without great Offence and Injuſtice refuſe to obey him. How prevalent ſoever our own Inclination be towards any thing, whenever it appears that God has forbidden it, a Fear of diſpleaſing him muſt over-rule all other Conſiderations; and we muſt be ſure to obey him even in the moſt difficult caſes; it being unqueſtionable that he has a Right to demand of us the Sacrifice of whatſoever we love beſt, and even of our own Lives. How much more ſhould we offer up to the Reſpect and Love due to Him, thoſe ſhameful Paſſions which are not only diſpleaſing to his Divine Majeſty, but do ourſelves an infinite Miſchief.

That we may the better apprehend how powerful an Argument this is, let it be conſidered, that it is not only out of Duty and Reverence to Almighty God; we ſtand obliged to pay an entire Submiſſion to his moſt holy Will, but it is what our own Intereſt alſo claims of us. This Will of God is *Good*, † as St. *Paul* ſpeaks, it is for our Profit and Advantage, and enjoyns us nothing but what is for our own Benefit. Can any one imagine that God would command ſuch things as ſeem grievous to us, that he would forbid what we are apt to take delight in, and would impoſe ſuch Duties as offer Violence to the Fleſh, without juſt reaſon for it, and meerly that he may ſhew his Authority in tormenting us? This would be an abominable Miſrepreſentation of a God who is all Love and Goodneſs. And in truth he does it only becauſe our Welfare requires that we

† Rom. 12. 2.

be uſed in this manner. He acts only as a tender and wiſe Father, who witholds from his Children ſuch things as would be hurtful to them, and who never croſſes them, but when it may conduce to make them wiſe and virtuous. We cannot ſatisfy our Paſſions, and take up with Creature-Enjoyments, without great Wrong and Ruine to ourſelves. This were the way to involve ourſelves in manifold Evils here in this Life, to ſet Almighty God at enmity with us, to leave us no hope of any greater Happineſs than what the things of this World afford, and ſo wholly to ſenſualize our Souls as to put them out of a capacity of ſeeking after the everlaſting Treaſures of the other Life. And we have therefore abundant cauſe to adore the infinite goodneſs of our gracious God, who has condeſcended to direct us how we may effectually prevent our own Deſtruction. Wherefore we ſhould readily and chearfully ſubmit ourſelves to this Will of our Lord, ſo juſt in itſelf, and ſo highly for our Advantage, ſhould ſilence all the Murmurings of the Fleſh, and take delight in fulfilling thoſe holy Laws whoſe great deſign is to conduct us to God, to imprint his Image upon us, and render us like him, and to prepare us by this means for the Enjoyment of the moſt conſummate Felicity.

CHAP. III.

The Third Motive, The Preſence of God.

THE Preſence of God is likewiſe a great Motive to Chaſtity; which as it is of ſingular efficacy for withdrawing from all ſort of Wickedneſs, ſo has it a particular Influence whereby to render us pure. And it is certain People would not give them-

themſelves, as they do, to Senſuality, if they would ſeriouſly remind themſelves, that they are continually in the ſight of the Moſt High.

This is a Sin of which Mankind are uſually aſhamed, and this Shame has ſuch Power with them, that there are few who can bring themſelves to ſuch a degree of Brutiſhneſs, as to conquer it, and lay it wholly aſide. The Unclean ſtudy to hide themſelves from the Preſence of Men. And even the Suſpicion or Fear of being ſeen will put a ſtop to their Intrigues, and cool their hotteſt Paſſion. There are many in the World who if they were convinced that all the Wickedneſs their impure Paſſions had put them upon were known, and that the ſhameful Exceſſes of their Thoughts and Deſires were any way diſcovered, would wiſh to buy it off, if it were poſſible, with all they are worth; nor would they know how to live in Society, nor would have the Confidence to appear abroad, but would be covered with Confuſion, and would chooſe rather to betake themſelves to ſome foreign Country, where their Extravagances were never heard of. How then does it come to paſs that the Fear of God does not deter Men from this Sin? How dare they commit it in the ſight of a moſt holy and moſt juſt God, who † *is not far from every one of us,* but beholds every thing we do, or think, and to whom Uncleanneſs is infinitely more odious than it is to Men? Or how can they be eaſy when they are conſcious to themſelves of having abandoned themſelves to infamous Actions or Deſires? Muſt not every one acknowledge it a moſt outrageous Provocation of Almighty God, to have leſs regard for his Divine Preſence, than for that of a Man, or even of a Child? They are aſhamed and reſerved before Men; and is it not intolerable that when Men are not in the way, and they are

† Act. 17. 27.

only in the Preſence of the Almighty, this Shame ſhould immediately vaniſh? To this purpoſe ſpeaks the Son of *Syrach*, Ecclus. xxiii. 18, 19. *A Man that breaketh Wedlock*, the Luſtful and Adulterer, *ſaith thus in his heart, Who ſeeth me? I am compaſſed about with Darkneſs, the Walls cover me, and Nobody ſeeth me; what need I to fear? Such an one only feareth the Eyes of Men, and knoweth not that the Eyes of the Lord are ten thouſand times brighter than the Sun, beholding all the ways of Men, and conſidering the moſt ſecret parts.*

It is of mighty uſe therefore to get this Thought well impreſſed upon our Minds, That God is everywhere, and takes notice of whatever we do. And Oh that we would often revolve it in our Minds, and would endeavour that it may in ſome ſort be always preſent with us! Let us remember we are continually in the Preſence of God, and moreover that it is a moſt Holy and moſt Juſt God in whoſe Preſence we are; that being Holineſs itſelf, he can bear no Impurity, and being perfectly Juſt and the Judge of the World, we have all the reaſon that can be to be afraid, whenſoever we offend his pure and holy Eyes by any Pollution. It was his own expreſs Command to the *Jews*, Deut. xxiii. 14. *The Lord thy God walketh in the midſt of thy Camp; therefore ſhall thy Camp be holy, that he ſee no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.* And if God exacted even an outward Purity in the *Iſraelites* Camp, upon this Conſideration, That he *was in the midſt of them*; can it be conceived that he will ſuffer the Filth of Vice in Chriſtians, in the midſt of whom he dwells in a more particular manner, than ever he did among the *Jews*? We ſhould be ſure therefore to render this Meditation familiar to us; and eſpecially when we are attacked by a Temptation, ſhould recollect that God's Eye is upon us; that he is near us, and obſerves and ſees what

what we are doing at this very instant, and whether we have the Courage to resist the attraction of a brutish Lust for his sake; or whether we prefer an infamous Passion before the Reverence we owe to Him. This Reflexion well attended to would constrain us to cry out with *Joseph, How can I do this great Wickedness, and sin against God?*

This Motive will not only be of use for withdrawing from the Crime, but will oblige us to keep our Desires and the Motions of our Heart in good order. For if God be present to our Thoughts, if he be within us, and searches and examines us, and * *all things are naked and open to his Eyes*; it necessarily follows that whenever we give up our Hearts to Sensuality, God is witness of all the Vanity, Lasciviousness, and Immodesty that is in our Thoughts and Imagination. And how unagreeable an Object to the Eyes of God must a Heart be, where Lust reigns, and the Flames of a thousand corrupt Desires are perpetually blowing up? Did the impure Person weigh well with himself, that from the time this abominable Passion began first to take possession of him, God has beheld all that he has done or thought, and that he still is, and always will be with him, he would find it a very difficult matter not to be affrighted, And if Persons would often make these Reflexions, they would assuredly become much purer and chaster than they are.

* Heb. 4. 13.

CHAP. IV.

The Fourth Motive, The Life and Sufferings of our Bleſſed Saviour.

IT has been hitherto made ſufficiently apparent that the Doctrine of our Lord *Chriſt Jeſus* calls for Chaſtity, and that the Conſideration hereof is a very powerful Engagement to apply ourſelves to this Virtue. But it is not by his Doctrine alone that the Son of God was willing to diſpoſe us to Chaſtity, but farther alſo by his Life and by his Sufferings. He came into the World to raiſe Mankind to a ſupernatural State of Happineſs, and to wean them from the Earth. To this end he lived here below in an entire Freedom from the things of the World; and this was one reaſon of his Sufferings and his profound Humiliation.

I. To begin with our Saviour's Life, I need not ſay that it was completely pure, and that none could diſcover any the leaſt or lighteſt Defilement in it. He ate, he drank, he was ſubject to our innocent Infirmities, he made uſe of indifferent things, but yet he lived in a total unacquaintedneſs with carnal Pleaſures; hereby teaching plainly that all who profeſs themſelves his Diſciples and Followers are to be extremely moderate in this reſpect. We muſt propoſe our Lord to ourſelves as a Patern for our Imitation, to tread in his Steps being the great Duty of a Chriſtian; and muſt endeavour to reſemble him as far as poſſibly we can, in all his Virtues, and more particularly in his Purity and Temperance, no leſs than in his Charity and his Zeal. † *He that ſaith he abideth in him, ought himſelf alſo ſo to walk even as he walked.* And

† St. Jo. 2. 6.

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can it be thought after this, that Chriſtians are at liberty to lead a life wholly Carnal and Senſual? Or if they do, what manner of agreement is there betwixt them and their Head?

I am very ſenſible that in the Condition wherein we are in this World, we can never hope to be as pure as our Lord and Saviour was. Nor does he require it of us. Only he would have us imitate him as far as we are capable, and to this end to abſtain from whatſoever he has forbidden us. Moreover I muſt note here, that the Difference which is betwixt our Lord Chriſt and us, is ſo far from Authorizing any to let looſe the Reins to their Paſſions, that on the contrary it is even this Difference that obliges us all to be upon our guard. Our Lord being exempt from all Corruption had no need of being forewarned to arm himſelf againſt Temptations, whereas we are in great danger of ſuffering ourſelves to be led aſide by them, and by conſequence this ſame Thought that we are liable to the Paſſions of the Fleſh, ſhould in a peculiar manner make us the more vigilant and circumſpect, and ſhould wean us the more effectually from all Senſuality.

II. The Sufferings of our Saviour teach us the ſame Leſſon. The Croſs of our Lord which makes up all the knowledg of a Chriſtian, and ought to be the continual Object of our Meditation, is a moſt powerful Motive to Chaſtity. This Croſs was the loweſt degree of our Saviours Humiliation, and that which compleated his renunciation of the World. He not only taſted no carnal Pleaſure, but he came to ſuffer whatever is moſt dolorous; and for this cauſe he ended his Life upon the Croſs. And why wou'd he do this, if not in the firſt place to make Expiation for the Sins of Mankind, and next to teach them by his own Example, what he had before delivered and enjoined

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* St. Mat. 16. 24. as the Sum of his Doctrine; that * *they muſt deny themſelves and take up their Croſs?* This is the weighty Doctrine which Chriſt crucified preſſes upon all that profeſs to believe in him. The Croſs of our Redeemer *crucifies the Fleſh, mortifies the Luſts, and cauſes the Chriſtian to be crucified and dead to the World;* as St. *Paul* teaches in his Epiſtle to the *Galatians.* And after this will it become us to ſearch after the Pleaſures and Delights of the World? Whoſoever well underſtands the great Myſtery of the Croſs of Chriſt, cannot but know that he ought to bear his own, and to lead a mortified Life, and that without this he can never attain to eternal Glory. Our Lord *Jeſus* went thither by the way of Sufferings; and let not us think to accompany him there by that of Delights. A Man cannot have the heart to give himſelf up to Pleaſures, when he repreſents to himſelf Chriſt in the midſt of his Suf-

† Rom. 6. 4, 6. ferings. A Chriſtian † *that has been crucified and buried with Jeſus Chriſt in his Death by Baptiſm, walketh* thenceforward *in newneſs of Life,* he *knows that the old man is crucified with him, that the Body of Sin might be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve Sin.* He is very far from plunging himſelf in groſs and ſenſual Pleaſures, and giving up his Soul to the fooliſh and corrupt Delights of the Fleſhly-minded. His Body is brought into Subjection, his Soul is united to his Saviour,

‖ Gal. 2. 20. and he can ſay with St. *Paul,* ‖ *I am crucified with Chriſt, nevertheleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me: and the Life which I now live in the Fleſh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.* And thus it appears how the Life and Sufferings of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* are a Motive to Chaſtity.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

The Fifth Motive, The Glorious State we are in.

CHRISTIANS have another Motive to Chaſtity, ariſing from the Glory of their own Condition, and the happy State to which God has advanced them. They are Men formed after the Image of God, and reſemble him in the excellency of their Nature, and the Difference that is between them and Beaſts. So that their own Qualifications as Men engage them to govern themſelves by the Principles of Reaſon and Virtue. But the Character of Chriſtians may well put them upon labouring to bear this Image in a perfecter manner. They are called † to be *holy as God is holy*, and * *pure as He is pure*, and by conſequence to abſtain from all Pollution. St. *Paul* teaches this moſt manifeſtly, *Epheſ.* iv. 20, &c. He makes the Image of God to conſiſt chiefly in being free from Impurity. For having given an account of the Abominations of the Pagans, ſee how he applyes himſelf to his Chriſtian Readers. *Ye have not ſo learned Chriſt; If ſo be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jeſus: That ye put off concerning the former converſation the Old-man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful luſts; and that ye put on the New-man.* And again he delivers almoſt the very ſame Doctrine, *Col.* iii. 9, 10. In both which places the Apoſtle oppoſes the Image of God to the Impurities of the Heathens, evidently ſuppoſing that this Image is defaced in a Chriſtian who is not pure.

† 1 S. Pet. 1. 16.
* 1 S. Jo. 3. 3.

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Thus it appears that the Character we bear as Chriſtians in a particular manner obliges us to live in Chaſtity; this being the great Motive the Apoſtles inſiſted upon for baniſhing all the Pollutions of the Fleſh from amongſt the Diſciples of our Lord; ‖ that *they ſhould not walk as other Gentiles did, who having the Underſtanding darkened, had given themſelves over to Laſciviouſneſs, to work all Uncleanneſs; * ſhould not live in the Luſt of Concupiſcence, as the Gentiles which know not God;* but † *the time paſt of their Life ſhould ſuffice to have wrought the Will of the Gentiles, when they walked in Laſciviouſneſs, and all ſorts of Luſts, Debauchery, and Exceſs.* Whence we ſee that as Impurity was next to Idolatry, the moſt prevailing and moſt abominable Sin of the Heathens, ſo on the other hand Chaſtity is one of the chief and principal Virtues of a Chriſtian.

‖ Eph. 4. 17, 18, 19.

* 1 Theſſ. 4. 5.

† St. Pet. 4. 3.

And it will highly become us therefore to be ſeriouſly and frequently reflecting upon it. God has granted us to be born in his Church, he has honoured us with a holy Calling, ſuch as aims at preſerving us from the Defilements of the World. ‡ *Our Bodies and our Souls are his*, ſays St. *Paul* expreſly, to diſſuade from Impurity, and to inſtruct us that it would be a horrible Prophanation and Sacrilege to abandon ourſelves to our ſhameful Paſſions of the Fleſh. We are invited by our Religion to ∴ *preſent our Bodies and Spirits a living Sacrifice to God, and glorify him with both theſe parts of us.* But to offer to God a Body and Soul polluted and infected, would be to tender him an Abomination, much as if the *Jews* ſhould have taken upon them to ſacrifice a Dog or a Swine. The Scripture compares ſuch as are enſlaved to their carnal Luſts, to the naſtieſt and filthieſt of Beaſts. *For if after they have eſcaped the Pollutions of the World*, ſays St. *Peter*, 2 Ep. ii. 20, 21, 22. *through the Knowledge of our Lord*

‡ 1 Cor. 6. 20.

∴ Rom 12. 1. & 1 Cor. 6. 20.

Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, they are again entangled and overcome, the latter end is worſe with them then the beginning. For it had been better for them never to have known the way of Righteouſneſs, then after they have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment delivered to them. But it is happened to them according to the true Proverb, The Dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the Sow that was waſhed to her wallowing in the Mire. Which Compariſon lets us ſee that the Senſualiſts diſhonour their Chriſtianity, and caſt themſelves down from the moſt glorious Condition Mankind is capable of attaining to, into a moſt contemptible State.

Many other excellent Obſervations might be made from the ſeveral Methods the Sacred Writers take for deſcribing the glorious State of Chriſtians. For inſtance we are told, that ‖ *they have Communion with God and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and that they are in Jeſus Chriſt, and Jeſus Chriſt is in them.* ‖ 1 St. Jo. 1, & 2. Can a ſtricter or more honourable Union be imagined, than this? Or can any thing be conceived that requires greater Purity? So ſays St. *John* † *If we walk in the Light we have Fellowſhip with God, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt, but he who walks in Darkneſs lyes if he ſays that he is within this Communion.* † *ibid.* But now who walks more in Darkneſs than the Impure, who indulge themſelves in thoſe very Sins, which the Scripture calls * *the Works of Darkneſs?* St. *Paul* tells us likewiſe that Chriſtians have the Honour and Glory of being Members of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the Temples of the *Holy Ghoſt*; which we have already ſeen are infinitely glorious Names, as importing a moſt intimate Communion with our Lord; but that without Chaſtity theſe Relations cannot be preſerv'd; but Impurity will break the Links whereby we are faſtened to our Saviour; it defiles and diſhonours our Body; it * Rom. 13. 12.

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drives away the Spirit of God; and by this Sin we loſe all the Privileges of our Chriſtianity.

Thoſe Auguſt Titles, and ſo many others which the Scriptures aſcribe to us, as of Saints, the Elect, the Children of God, the Redeemed of the Lord, New Men, *&c.* will by no means allow us to wallow in beaſtly Pleaſures, and bring ourſelves into bondage to infamous Paſſions; but ſhould on the contrary inſpire us with Deſires and Aims, worthy of the Grace which God has beſtowed upon us, and the Glory whereof he would have us Partakers. This St. *Paul* affirms in the ſixth and ſeventh Chapters of his ſecond Epiſtle to the *Corinthians.* He ſpeaks there of the glorious State whereto we are called, and the Advantages of the divine Covenant. He ſays *we are the Temple of the living God, that God dwells in the midſt of us, that he will be our God and our Father, and will own us for his People and Children*; and then concludes, that *we ought to ſeparate ourſelves from among the Wicked, and not to touch any unclean thing, but to cleanſe ourſelves from all Pollution both of Body and Spirit.* Theſe are without doubt very charming and powerful Engagements to Chaſtity, and to look well to ourſelves, and reverence the Characters of our divine Vocation, which are imprinted upon our Bodies, and upon our Souls.

Theſe are not only Motives in point of Decency, but of Juſtice, and which lay upon us an indiſpenſable Obligation to live chaſtly. Becauſe God in raiſing us to ſo honourable a Condition, furniſhes us with moſt effectual Means of guarding ourſelves againſt impure Paſſions. He makes uſe of his Goſpel; he ſets before our Eyes the ſtrongeſt Arguments; he fortifies us by his Spirit; he

† 2 S. Pet. 1. 3. † *gives us according to his Divine Power, all things that pertain to the Life of the Soul, and to Godlineſs.* And let it be particularly remembred that the Uſe of

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the Sacraments tends to keep us off from Impurity, and that a Man cannot reflect upon these Sacred Ordinances, which it has pleased our Lord to establish in his Church, but he will immediately perceive what an Obligation they lay upon us to be pure. The Use of them should sanctify our Bodies, inasmuch as these same Bodies, our Hands our Mouths are the Vessels which receive these holy Signs; and who will say these Vessels ought not to be kept pure? The Sacraments are of the number of holy things, which are not at all for Dogs and Swine. By Baptism we have been consecrated to our Lord, God has set his Seal upon us, and we have made a solemn Vow before him, to renounce the World, and the Flesh with its Desires. And in Communicating in the holy Eucharist, we repeat this Vow, and engage ourselves anew to refrain from Sin. So that Christians who live not chastly, despise the Glory of their own Estate, tread under foot their singular Advantages, violate their Engagements, and leave themselves entirely inexcusable.

I shall beg leave farther to add one Reflection upon the difference of the Times we live in from those of former Ages. Men have been known to be chast when they had not such Advantages for it as we enjoy. St. *Chrysostom* * presses this Consideration; when speaking of the Chastity of *Joseph*, and that of *Job*, he proclaims it admirable, considering the Time in which they lived. He remarks that they lived before our Saviour's Incarnation, and had never heard the Voice of St. *Paul* saying, *Know ye not that your Bodies are the Members of Jesus Christ?* nevertheless they believed that such as make a Profession of serving God ought to have the Command over their own Desires, and to pre-

* Serm. de Contin.

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ſerve themſelves in Continence. He profeſſes it a wonderful thing, to have ſeen ſuch Examples of Chaſtity, at a time when they had not ſuch ſtrong Motives to this Virtue. And upon the whole, he concludes, That Chriſtians are under a much greater Obligation to live in the Fear of God, and in Chaſtity, whereby to render themſelves worthy of the Honour they have of being Members of *Jeſus Chriſt*: And that it is not to be expreſſed, what an Indignity and Affront it is to the Mercy of God, to abandon themſelves to Senſuality, after ſo ſignal an Honour done them. Laſtly, This pious Father adds, That whenſoever Evil Deſires ariſe in the Mind, our Courſe muſt be to recall theſe Reflections, as being the proper Means of delivering from impure Temptations.

CHAP. VI.

The Sixth Motive, Death.

IF we find great Invitation to Chaſtity, from the State wherein we are in this World; our Future State preſents us with other not leſs cogent Arguments. And upon this Account it is that I now deſign to touch upon the Eſtates through which we are to paſs after this Life.

And the Firſt thing that here preſents itſelf to our Thoughts, is Death.

It has been a long time ſaid, That the Meditation of Death, is moſt uſeful for repreſſing our Paſſions. But it has a particular Efficacy, in relation to the Duty I am treating of. Death being a Deſtruction of the Body, the Conſideration of our Mortality ſhould over-rule us in our Searches

after

after Bodily Pleaſures, and ſhould breed in us a diſguſt of them. If Perſons were to live in this World for many Ages, they would ſeem more excuſable in a paſſionate purſuit after the Pleaſures of Senſe, becauſe ſo they might flatter themſelves with the hopes of enjoying them for a long time; and yet the thought, that they muſt one day loſe them, would be ready to trouble them in the height of all their Mirth. But when we call to mind, that we are to make but a ſhort Stay in this World; that our Life is paſſing on, and whatſoever is the Object of our Paſſions paſſes together with it; that this Body of which we are ſo overfond, will ſpeedily be laid in the Grave, and will become an Object of Horrour, and a heap of Stench and Putrifaction; theſe mortifying Thoughts muſt doubtleſs tend to allay the Heat of our Lufts. And accordingly St. *Peter* tells us, * *our being in quality of Strangers and Pilgrims, obliges us to abſtain from fleſhly Luſts.* Whoſoever then has theſe Thoughts duly imprinted upon his Mind, that weighs with himſelf how ſoon it may fall out that he ſhall be no longer in this World, and, for ought he knows to the contrary, Death may ſeize him in the midſt of his Pleaſures, will find it neceſſary to abate of his Earneſtneſs in ſeeking them, and will be far leſs influenced by their Allurements.

* 1 S. Pet. 2. 11.

But withal, it is farther to be remembred, That the Death of a Senſualiſt muſt needs be very miſerable; and the Separation whereby he is ſnatched from his Pleaſures, cannot but be exceeding ſad. For the more any one has lov'd his Pleaſures, the greater Grief will it be to him to part with them; and the more he has ſought after the Delights and Diverſions of this Life, the more bitter will Death be to him. None is ever more afraid of Dying, or betrays more

of Cowardiſe and Puſillanimity at the approach of his Latter End, than the Effeminate and Voluptuous. And the Condition of one who is in fear of Death, and dreads the thoughts of being taken hence, is ſo diſconſolate, that no wiſe Man would venture to end his Days in this manner. Eſpecially ſeeing, on the other hand, it is ſuch a Happineſs, to be able to leave the World without Regret, and to look Death undauntedly in the face, that one would think every one ſhould earneſtly labour after ſo deſirable an End; to which yet nothing conduces more, than to accuſtom one's ſelf, in time, to refrain from what he deſires, and to fortifie his Soul and his Spirit, by a contempt of Senſual Pleaſures.

To improve this Argument a little farther, it will be requiſite briefly to conſider the State whereto Men are reduced by Death, whether in relation to the Body, or to the Soul. The Body is laid in the Earth, a lifeleſs, ſenſeleſs Carcaſs, incapable of any ſort of Pleaſure, and never to taſte of it more. The Soul, indeed, does not periſh with the Body, but ſubſiſts after Death, lives, and retains its power of Thought and Reflection. Thus much the Heathens confeſs'd, and every one may eaſily perceive, that will but attend to it; but Revelation puts it beyond all doubt. Now, in what Condition muſt a Soul be, which knows no other Pleaſures but thoſe of Senſe, and which, during its continuance in the Body, was become wholly Senſual: In what Condition muſt ſuch a Soul be, when it finds itſelf tranſported into a New World, where it can diſcover nothing of what it is ſo much in love with?

It is no ſooner parted from the Body, but it immediately begins to bewail its own unhappineſs, that it is loſt, and undone, and is for ever ſeparated from God, and its ſoveraign Good.

What

What is paſt, ſerves only to raiſe in it an afflicting Regret and Remorſe; and Futurity gives it no Expectation of any thing but what is highly Tormenting. It has no hope now of any manner of Comfort; can no longer enjoy any of thoſe Pleaſures it had formerly been acquainted with, and is ſadly unqualify'd to taſte of thoſe which alone could render it happy in the State whereinto it is now tranſlated. Thus wretched and miſerable is the poor Soul, deprived of all Comfort, and overwhelmed with Sorrow, upon a melancholick Proſpect of its approaching Judgment. This is the woful Condition of the Sinner. But, oh, the unſpeakable Happineſs of a pure Soul! What Conſolation does it enjoy in the other Life! How does it rejoyce, to think that it had taken care, in time, to diſengage it ſelf of all ſenſual Pleaſures, and accuſtomed itſelf to ſeek after that Felicity which is only to be found in God! Such a Soul can readily leave its Body, whenever it is called for, and will be ſure to find itſelf much nearer to its God than ever it had been before, and will be all filled with Joy, and a ſweet and delightful Expectation of a Reſurrection, and Eternal Glory.

CHAP. VII.

The Seventh Motive, The Reſurrection.

WE have now ſeen, that a Conſideration of Death, and the Deſtruction of the Body, pleads hard with us to keep our ſelves pure. But it is a much more powerful Conſideration, to think that this Body muſt be at length reſtored by a Reſurrection. Our Bodies do not wholly

periſh, and for ever; but God will reanimate and enliven them. *Jeſus-Chriſt* will come to reſcue theſe Parts of us, for which he has ſhed his own Blood, from the Power of the Grave; and to raiſe up theſe Temples, which he had conſecrated to himſelf, but which had been deſtroyed by Death. But then it is to be noted, that if our Bodies muſt riſe, it will not be that they may ſerve to the ſame Uſes they had formerly, but to very different Purpoſes. * *They ſhall be raiſed, not to be then ſenſual, or natural Bodies, but to be ſpiritual Bodies;* † *made like to our Bleſſed Saviour's Glorious Body;* and they ſhall inhabit the other World, where will be nothing carnal, ſenſual or earthly.

* Cor. 15. 44.

† Phil. 3. 21.

This is a very glorious Hope, but which at the ſame time tends naturally to our Sanctification. This Glory whereto our Bodies are appointed, gives us to underſtand, that they were not made only for this ſhort, tranſitory Life, but that our Gracious God has deſign'd them for a more Perfect and Eternal State. Wherefore we muſt by no means perſwade ourſelves, that they are to ſerve only for Pleaſures, and that the Gratification of our ſenſual Deſires is the End they were made for. There is a far more noble and more excellent Uſe to be made of them; in order whereto, we muſt look upon ourſelves as concerned to have ſuch a Regard for them, that we may, as much as in us lies, even before Death ſeizes us, approach to that bleſſed State whereat we hope one day to arrive. Our Regeneration ſhould beget in us a Change like that which our Reſurrection will effect, that is to ſay, it ſhould render us Spiritual Men, ſhould take away, as much as may be, what is dull, earthy, and imperfect in us, and ſet us free from the Slavery of Luſts. Our Bodies are at preſent Members of the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, and the Temples of the *Holy Ghoſt*; and this obliges us to treat them

them with Reſpect, and to preſerve them in Purity. Which we ſhall find ourſelves the more ſtrongly obliged to do, if we conſider that theſe Bodies are to be the Members and Temples of our Lord, in a far more perfect and glorious manner, at the Day of the Reſurrection. How unſpotted then ought the Purity of that Body to be, which is ordained to Immortality and Glory, above in Heaven?

It is upon this Conſideration, that St. *Paul* diſſuades Chriſtians from Impurity, 1 *Cor.* vi, 13, 14. *The Body* (ſays the Apoſtle) *is not for Fornication, but for the Lord; and as God has raiſed up Jeſus Chriſt, he will alſo raiſe us up by his own Power.* In the 3d Chapter of his Epiſtle to the *Philippians*, ver. 20, 21. he declares, That *the true Chriſtians, who expect the Lord Jeſus Chriſt from Heaven, to come and change their vile Body, that it may be faſhioned like his glorious Body, demean themſelves as Citizens of Heaven, and have quite different thoughts from thoſe of carnal Men, who have their Belly for their God, and who mind earthly things.* He again urges the ſame Conſideration, *Rom.* viii. 5, *&c.* aſſuring us, That *if we live the Life of Chriſt, and take care to mortifie our Luſts, our Bodies, which are ſubject to Death becauſe of Sin, ſhall be raiſed by the power of the ſame Spirit of Chriſt, by which we had overcome our fleſhy Deſires in this World; and that they who ſhall have thus mortified the Works of the Body, and their Paſſions, ſhall live thenceforward a glorious and immortal Life: but they that had lived after the Fleſh, ſhall have Miſery and Eternal Death for their portion.* Whence the Apoſtle draws this Conſequence; That *we are under an indiſpenſable Obligation not to live after the Fleſh, and not to employ the Members of our Body to Uncleanneſs and to Sin, but to conſecrate them to Holineſs and Righteouſneſs.*

How dreadful then will be the Reſurrection of thoſe, who inſtead of ordering their Converſation aright, according to the Laws and the Spirit of Chriſt, ſhall have choſen to plunge themſelves in Uncleanneſs? They ſhall indeed ariſe, but, as the Prophet *Daniel* ſpeaks, *Dan.* xii. 2. *to Shame and everlaſting Contempt.* This Shame will be the Inheritance of thoſe who ſhall have made their Bodies Veſſels to Diſhonour, Inſtruments of a brutiſh Senſuality, and Receptacles of Filth and Impurity. The Voluptuous are Slaves to their Bodies, and do all for their ſakes, and think to procure them the greateſt Good, and moſt delightful Satisfaction. But in reality, they diſhonour and deſtroy them, they expoſe them to Eternal Miſery and Reproach, and, in ſhort, prepare them for Hell. And ſo they become Murderers of their Bodies, aſwell as their Souls. Whereas thoſe who, in obedience to the Precepts of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, keep the Body pure, treating it with ſome rigour, and bringing its Appetites into ſubjection; theſe are the true Lovers of their Bodies; theſe promote their real Welfare, and do them all the Honour that is in their power: This being the only way of attaining to the Reſurrection of the Juſt, and ſecuring an Intereſt in thoſe Joys and Pleaſures, which ſhall be reſerved in the Life to come, for ſuch as ſhall not have ſuffered themſelves to be enſlaved by the Luſts and Vanities of This.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

The Eighth Motive, The Laſt Judgment.

AFter the Reſurrection, all Mankind ſhall appear before the Tribunal of God to be judged for what they had done in the Body, to give an account of their paſt Converſation, and to receive according to the tenor of it, whether well or ill. At whichtime the Impure ſhall meet with a moſt ſevere Judgment.

There is no queſtion to be made, but all Men whatſoever, the very Heathens not excepted, muſt be judged. St. *Paul* ſays of theſe, *Rom.* ii. 12, 13, 14. that they ſhall be judged by the Law of Nature. The ſame Apoſtle likewiſe teaches us † that Impurity is one of thoſe Sins they will be to account for. St. *Peter* declares alſo, 1 St. *Pet.* iii. 3, 4, 5. that *the Gentiles who walked in Laſciviouſneſs, and all exceſs of Riot, ſhall give an account to him who will come to judge the Quick and the Dead.* And if the Heathens who had not any other than the dim Light of Nature to guide them ſhall be thus judged, what a heavy Doom muſt thoſe Chriſtians expect, who ſhall have violated both the Laws of Nature, and thoſe of the Goſpel too, ſhall have deſpiſed ſo much Light, ſo many Arguments, ſuch peculiar Aſſiſtances, as ſhall have been vouchſafed them in order to Purity, and ſhall have abandoned themſelves to luſtful and diſorderly Paſſions? Theſe, we know, are in a particular manner threatned with the Judgment of God. So ſays the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews*, ch. xiii. 4. *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge.* Nothing can be more expreſs than this. At another time St. *Paul* affirms, that *We ſhall all appear before*

† Rom. 1. 24, &c.

the Judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive in the Body according to what he had done, whether good or bad, 2 Cor. v. 10. In which Words there is ſomething that deſerves to be more eſpecially attended to by the Impure, namely that mention is there made of the Body. For whether theſe Words ſignify that Men ſhall be puniſhed or rewarded in their own Body; or as ſome underſtand them, that God will render to Men according as they ſhall have done *in the Body*, that is to ſay, whilſt they dwelt in the Body, during this Life, every one muſt needs ſee that one way or other the Body will contribute very much to our Happineſs or Miſery; and that therefore the uſe we ſhall have made of the Body will then prove of vaſt Importance. Whereby we may ſee what ſuch are to expect, as ſhall have committed that Sin which is in a peculiar Senſe ſtiled the Sin of the Body, and who ſhall at the Laſt Day appear before God with Bodies and Souls that had been polluted by Incontinence.

But what we read in the ſecond Epiſtle of St. *Peter*, ch. ii 4, &c. ought above all to be conſidered with great attention. This Apoſtle denounces the Judgment of God to thoſe falſe Teachers whoſe chief Character was Licentiouſneſs and Impurity; and proves the certainty of this Judgment by the Puniſhment of the wicked Angels, by that of the Inhabitants of the old World, and by the Deſtruction of thoſe abominable Cities of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*; and concludes from all theſe Examples, that Sinners, and moſt certainly the Impure, ſhall be puniſhed at the laſt Day. *If God ſpared not the Angels which had ſinned, if he ſpared not the old World, but brought a Flood upon the World of the Ungodly, if he condemned Sodom and Gomorrah, with an Overthrow, reducing them to Aſhes, and making them an Example to thoſe that ſhould after live ungodly, and delivered juſt Lot*

vexed

vexed with the filthy Converſation of the Wicked; the Lord knoweth how to reſerve the Unjuſt unto the Day of Judgment to be puniſhed; but chiefly them that walk after the Fleſh in the Luſt of Uncleanneſs. Theſe Words are directly levelled againſt Impurity. Theſe Threatnings, though relating to all the Workers of Iniquity, have yet a particular reſpect to the Unclean, and ſuch as follow the Luſts of the Fleſh; and are ſupported by terrible Inſtances of the Wrath of Heaven upon ſuch as give themſelves over to the filthy Luſts of the Fleſh. For we have ſhewn that it was chiefly this Sin which gave occaſion for theſe dreadful Judgments of God; as is more ſenſibly evident in the Deſtruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah.* St. *Jude* alledges the ſame Example, and to the ſame purpoſe with St. *Peter. Sodom and Gomorrah and the Cities about them giving themſelves over to Fornication, and going after ſtrange Fleſh, are ſet forth for an Example, ſuffering the Vengeance of eternal Fire,* Ep. St. *Jude* 7. And this he ſays to prove that *the Lord will not ſuffer thoſe to go unpuniſhed, who defile the Fleſh, and turn the Grace of God into Laſciviouſneſs.* Theſe Conſiderations are of ſingular force; theſe Examples, and particularly that of *Sodom,* ſhould make the Impure to tremble, and ſtrike them with a Dread of their approaching Judgment.

There is one thing more to be obſerved in relation to this Sin, which is that it is very often committed in ſecret; but yet if God be obliged as Judge of the World to puniſh other Sins, he is more eſpecially engaged to puniſh hidden Sins. The Crimes of Uncleanneſs are, as St. *Paul* ſpeaks, † *Works of Darkneſs,* and *things committed in ſecret,* but they ſhall however be brought to light, at that Great Day which will make all manifeſt. Theſe ſecret Sins and unknown to Men, will be the more certainly and more ſeverely puniſhed, becauſe thoſe who † Epheſ. 5. 11, 13.

who commit them, though in truth highly culpable, yet paſs for innocent, and are not put to diſgrace by them; whilſt others who have not had Cunning enough to conceal their Crimes, or did not think fit to do it, but choſe rather penitently to confeſs them, have ſuffered Reproach and Puniſhments in this Life. But it is more eſpecially to be obſerved of Impurity, that many of thoſe who conceal their Guilt, die without Repentance, and for this reaſon, becauſe they have betaken themſelves to Lying, and other wicked Courſes, as I have ſhewn, whereby they lay themſelves under a ſort of Neceſſity of perſevering in their Sin, and dying without either Confeſſion or Reparation. Whence it comes to paſs, that generally ſpeaking, ſuch as have ſinned in ſecret, are in a far more dangerous State, than thoſe whoſe Faults are moſt taken notice of, becauſe theſe are in a better diſpoſition to diſcharge their Conſcience, and riſe again after their Fall. They that judge themſelves in this World ſhall not be judged in the other.

From what has been ſaid it follows that the Unclean ſhall not eſcape the Judgment of God; and therefore the Proſpect and Apprehenſion of this Judgment ſhould make us all chaſt. Oh how dreadful muſt the Approaching and the awful Appearance of the Great Day, which ſhall determine the eternal Fate of all Mankind, be to thoſe who ſhall have lived in a State of Pollution! It is eaſy to gueſs what Diſtreſs and Anguiſh will then ſeize them, with what Confuſion they will be covered; and what on the contrary will be the Confidence and Joy of all that *ſhall have lived in this preſent World in Chaſtity and Temperance; waiting for the bleſſed Hope, and the glorious Appearance of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.*

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

The Ninth Motive, Hell-Torments.

FROM the Conſideration of the Laſt moſt Dreadful Judgment, it is natural to paſs on to what will follow it. And accordingly we are taught that after Mankind have been judged, || *ſome ſhall go away into Life eternal, and the reſt into Everlaſting Puniſhment.* We have likewiſe already ſeen that theſe Puniſhments of the Life to come belong to the Impure. Our Lord ſpeaking of Chaſtity, ſays it is better to mortify ourſelves, and deny ourſelves thoſe things which are moſt agreeable to the Fleſh, * *than to be caſt into Hell-Fire, where the Worm dies not, and the Fire is not quenched.* St. *John* declares, † that *the Impure, Fornicators, and Abominable, ſhall have their Portion in the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimſtone, which is the ſecond Death.* Well then may we believe that the Puniſhments of the other World will be exceedingly ſevere, when the Holy Spirit ſets before us ſo terrible a Draught of them, when he ſpeaks of Fire, and Brimſtone, and Hell, and the Worm that never dies, and the Fire that is never to be extinguiſhed. We may judge alſo of the Severity of the Puniſhments reſerved for the Impure, by the weight of thoſe temporal Judgments that God has upon certain occaſions inflicted upon the Luſtful and Licentious. But above all the Example of *Sodom* is moſt remarkable; ſo that we cannot call to mind this lewd People conſumed by Fire from Heaven, without obſerving what an Abhorrence

|| St. Mat. 20. 46.

* St. Mar. 9. 43, 44.

† Rev. 21. 8.

the

the Almighty has of Impurity, and how inſupportable the Puniſhment of this Sin will be.

No doubt it will be pleaded that God did not ſo terribly deſtroy this People for the Sins of Fornication and Adultery, but for thoſe other more intolerable Abominations and Impieties that reigned amongſt them. And I grant it. But then it is to be remembred that not only this People fell into theſe dreadful Exceſſes by means of the other Sins of the Fleſh, and ſo it was Incontinence that brought this Deſtruction upon them; but beſides there is a difference to be made between the State of this People and that of Chriſtians, inaſmuch as if the Faults are not the ſame, neither are the Perſons. For Men are not only more or leſs culpable according to the Flagitiouſneſs of their Sins, but likewiſe, and perhaps not leſs, by the Eſtate, and more or leſs favourable Circumſtances wherein they are ſet. By this Rule, which yet is moſt unqueſtionable, Fornication, Adultery, and all ſort of Licentiouſneſs is far more criminal in a Chriſtian, who is inſtructed by the Goſpel, and has before his Eyes the Doctrine and Example of his Saviour, who is ſo powerfully aſſiſted in order to a Purity of Life, and has ſolemnly renounced the World, and all the inordinate Deſires of the Fleſh; Impurity, I ſay, is far more criminal in ſuch an one, bleſſed with theſe ineſtimable Advantages, than were the Proſtitutions of a Pagan buried in Darkneſs and Idolatry. To commit the Crimes of Impurity in the Church of Chriſt, is a much higher Provocation than thoſe Abominations which were acted in *Sodom*. And upon this Difference between the Perſons it was that our bleſſed Lord ſo peremptorily declared, that * *thoſe who would not be reformed by his Preaching amongſt them, ſhould be more ſeverely puniſhed at the Day of Judgment than Sodom and Gomorrah.* Wherefore I make no difficulty to affirm that impure Chriſtians, and more

* St. Mat 11. 24.

more particularly thoſe that give themſelves up to Diſſoluteneſs and habitual Senſuality, will be more ſeverely puniſhed, than the Vileſt and moſt exceſſively Wicked amongſt the Heathens. The Torments of theſe latter will be leſs, and their Condition far eaſier to be born; and for this plain Reaſon, That their own Conſciences will not ſo ſharply rebuke them. This ought well to be conſidered. When we think of the Heathens, and in particular of this infamous *Sodom*, whoſe Diſſoluteneſs was ſo intolerable; of theſe wicked Cities, whoſe Memory will be always execrable, and which periſhed in ſo dreadful a manner; of theſe People whoſe Crimes were ſo deteſtable; it ſeems as if theſe were the moſt heinous Sinners the World ever bare. But let us not deceive ourſelves; the Condition of ſinful and vicious Chriſtians will be far more deplorable in the other World, than that of this People.

The Impure will be ſhut out of Heaven. Saint *Paul* profeſſes, 1 *Cor.* vi. 10. That *they ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* And we ſhall ſee in the next Chapter, that they cannot poſſibly be admitted into it; and that Impurity is an invincible Barr in their way to Eternal Salvation. What Deſpair will ſeize them, for having preferred tranſient and filthy Pleaſures, to an Eternity of Happineſs which they might have attained to, but from which they are now irrecoverably excluded, and all meerly through their own fault? They ſhall have their portion with the Devil and his Angels, and ſhall roar and languiſh under the ſame Puniſhment with him, becauſe they had choſen to be like this Unclean Spirit, and to do his Will.

But amongſt the other Puiſhments they ſhall have executed upon them, the Shame wherewith they ſhall be covered deſerves to be peculiarly attended

tended to. They will find themſelves expoſed, by reaſon of theſe dreadful Sins, to eternal Reproach before both God and Man. It is moſt certain, that in this Great Day, when * *God will bring every work to Judgment, together with every ſecret thing, whether it be good or evil;* † *and will bring to light the hidden things of Darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the counſels of the Heart,* || *and in the day when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of Men by Jeſus Chriſt;* the Crime and the Shame of theſe Tranſgreſſors ſhall be made publick. It has moreover been thought, that in the other Life, the Miſery and the Number of the Reprobate will be known to the Angels and to Men; who, as they ſhall obſerve the faithful Worſhippers of our Lord, ſo will they thoſe that ſhall have forſaken him. Moreover, according as the Juſtice and Goodneſs of God will be adorable in the manner of his manifeſting and crowning the Innocence of the Righteous; ſo will they be proportionably in the Puniſhment of ſecret Sins, ſuch as the Sins of the Fleſh for the moſt part are.

*Eccleſ. 12. 14.
† 1 Cor. 4. 5.
|| Rom. 2. 16.

As an Inſtance of this, let us call to mind, that there are divers Perſons whoſe luſtful manner of Life is not at all taken notice of, nor can they be charged with any known Immorality, and ſo they paſs under a very different Character from what they juſtly deſerve; theſe might be expected to be found amongſt the Saints in Glory, but will not be found there, becauſe of that Impurity wherein they had indulged themſelves in ſecret, and which had prevented their admiſſion into Heaven. The Damned in Hell will be greatly ſurprized, to behold ſuch amongſt themſelves as had been accounted Good Men, whoſe Virtue the Wicked themſelves reverenced, and whoſe Probity, perhaps whoſe Holineſs and Piety, was had in reputation. Now if any enquire how

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theſe came to be puniſhed in the company of the Profane, Blaſphemers, Murderers, *&c.* he will find theſe Men of whom he had ſo high an opinion, to have been given to Laſciviouſneſs. He will find his Neighbour whom he took to be ſo eminently Religious, had privately addicted himſelf to bruti ſh Paſſions, and was really a wretched Inſtance of Impurity, and ſo much the more culpable in the ſight of God, becauſe he had impoſed upon Men, by adding Hypocriſie to his love of Vice, and under an appearance of Vertue had covered a wanton Heart, and gratified his own infamous and ſenſual Deſires. Thus will Miſery and Shame be the Reward of thoſe who ſuffer themſelves to be enſlaved to this Paſſion.

I ſhall not go on to enlarge upon their doleful Condition, but ſhall rather obſerve of what ſingular Influence a Fear of Hell is, for obliging to Chaſtity. And here the Goodneſs of God is admirable, in offering ſuch powerful Motives for reclaiming from Sin; inaſmuch as the more intolerable theſe Torments are, the more ought they to affright us, and to make us Wiſe and Continent. So rare a Preſervative are they from Carnal Paſſions, ſo effectual a Barr to the Allurements of Luſt, and ſo proper a Means of defeating the Charms of Temptations. Let us then compare the falſe Delights they offer, with the intolerable Tortures that attend them; let us compare thoſe ſhameful and unprofitable Gratifications which are but for a moment, with the eternal Vengeance of the Life to come, let us conſider, that the Pleaſure paſſes away, but the Pain will never be over, and then ſee to what purpoſe all theſe Pleaſures ſerve, for which Men have had ſo great a fondneſs, and to which they have ſacrificed all they had, and even their own Conſciences with it; or whether they will adminiſter any manner of Conſolation.

ſolation. This may in a good meaſure be judged of, by what befalls us in this World. Every one ſees, that one only Sickneſs, one ſingle Pain, if in any meaſure of extremity, takes away our reliſh of the Pleaſures of this Life, and even cauſes an Averſion to them. What opinion then will Perſons have of theſe Pleaſures, what regard for them, when they ſhall be tormented in Hell? eſpecially when they ſhall reflect, that they were theſe ſame unhappy Pleaſures, that by their deceitful Enticements and poiſoned Baits, drew them into that deplorable ſtate of Perdition.

Wherefore, let all thoſe who without any Fear of God, or Reverence for their Baptiſmal Covenant, pollute themſelves with the filthy Sins of Laſciviouſneſs, weigh this well with themſelves: Let them bethink themſelves what is like to become of them, and whither their infamous Paſſion will carry them. They ſhall one day pay exceſſively dear for the brutiſh Dalliances with which they had pleaſed themſelves, unleſs they take care to amend their Lives in time, and make due Reparation for their Sins. Thoſe that burn with the impure flames of Luſt, ſhall one day burn likewiſe in thoſe of Hell. Let none of us deceive themſelves; this Sin leads directly to the dark Abyſs. *God will judge Whoremongers and Adulterers.* The Scripture ſays not this in vain; and ſince it ſpeaks ſo poſitively and ſo affectingly of theſe Torments, they muſt neceſſarily be both Terrible and Inevitable. I beſeech thoſe eſpecially who are in danger of being drawn into this ſo pernicious a Paſſion, and eſpecially the Younger Sort, to weigh this Argument well with themſelves; that they may be afraid of following ſo deſtructive an Inclination, and may prevent that dreadful Vengeance which will be the Portion of all who

* Eccl. 11. 9. * *who walk in the ways of their own Hearts, and the ſight*

ſight of their own eyes, and who *remember* not their *Creator in the days of their Youth*. Chaſtity is an excellent Security againſt all theſe Evils; and he that whilſt Young takes care to acquire and preſerve it, ſaves himſelf a great deal of Remorſe, and lays a good foundation for a ſolid Happineſs throughout the whole courſe of this Life, and for all Eternity.

CHAP. X.

The Tenth Motive, The Happineſs of the Life to come.

THE Laſt Motive to Chaſtity, is taken from the Happy State wherein the Bleſſed ſhall live in the World to come, the unconceivable Felicity whereto they will be advanced in Heaven. I ſhall not ſtand to deſcribe the Greatneſs of this Felicity, either with reſpect to its Nature, or to its Duration. I ſuppoſe it to be the happieſt State a Creature can be raiſed to; and that all we can conceive moſt deſirable in this World, is nothing, in compariſon of the Heavenly Treaſures, thoſe moſt ineſtimable Advantages, and thoſe unſpeakable Satisfactions, whereof the glorified Saints ſhall be poſſeſſed in the other Life.

This being ſuppoſed, I ſay, the Expectation of this Felicity, is a very conſiderable Engagement to Chaſtity. * *He that has this Hope in him, purifies himſelf.* † *Having therefore theſe Promiſes, let us cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit.* St. *Peter*, 1 Ep. i. 3. attributes ſuch Efficacy to theſe *great and precious Promiſes*, that he ſays they are able to raiſe us above ourſelves, and *to make us*

* 1 St. Joh. 3. 3.
† 2 Cor. 7. 1.

Partakers of the Divine Nature, by eſcaping the Corruption which is in the World through Luſt. And indeed, what ought not Perſons to attempt, that they may obtain an Intereſt in the Glory and Felicity of the other Life? Or, what can one that underſtands the Excellency of that Bleſſed State, ever ſet in competition with it? All the Pleaſures, all the Charms of Senſe, vaniſh, upon the appearance of theſe ineſtimable Promiſes. Men are touched with Pleaſure; and to the Carnally-minded it ſeems a very hard Leſſon, and an unreaſonable Task, to require that they deny themſelves the Pleaſures of Senſe. Yet theſe Pleaſures are nevertheleſs of no great value; they are ſhameful, they are often-times hurtful, but always are imperfect, vain and tranſitory. And were they more ſolid, and more laſting than they are, it were the height of Folly to prefer them before the ſupreme Happineſs of a Future Life: And indeed, not to have a very mean eſteem of them, and be ready to part with them whenſoever they interfere with our hopes of That. It has been formerly obſerv'd, and is ſtill to be ſeen every day, That People are not afraid to deprive themſelves of theſe ſort of Pleaſures, and to lead a painful and uneaſy Life. St. *Paul* affirms, That thoſe who were to *ſtrive for the Maſtery* in the Olympick Games, were *temperate in all things*, 1 *Cor.* ix. 25. What *Plato* writes upon this Subject, is proper alſo to be mention'd in this Place*. This Philoſopher, ſpeaking of the Laws which were to be enacted againſt Impurity and Debauchery, ſays, Though this Abſtinence from Pleaſures ſeems very difficult, yet it is not impoſſible to be effected: And for the Proof of his Aſſertion, he inſtances in certain Wreſtlers, who,

* Plat. de Legib. l. 8.

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to perform their Exerciſes the more Manfully, abſtained from theſe ſort of Pleaſures throughout their whole Lives. If the Heathens had theſe Sentiments, and could attain to ſuch Continency, what ought not Chriſtians to do, in order to the Heavenly Glory? *If theſe Wreſtlers did ſo much to gain a corruptible Crown, we ſhould be ready to do much more for an incorruptible,* as St. *Paul* argues.

It is true, if a Man could be received into Heaven, whatſoever Courſe he takes here, whether he renounce his Luſts, or ſtudy to attend and ſerve them, there would then be no ſuch abſolute neceſſity of Chaſtity. But if we would know for whom theſe infinite Rewards are reſerved, and who they are that ſhall be thought worthy to partake of the Glories of the other State, the Scripture plainly teaches them not to be ſuch as are given to Laſciviouſneſs; for it excludes theſe out of Heaven. St. *Paul* profeſſes more than once, That * *theſe ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* And St. *John* ſays, † *There ſhall in no wiſe enter into the heavenly Jeruſalem, any thing that defileth, or worketh abomination.*

* 1 Cor. 6. 10. Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21.
† Rev. 21. 27.

But to come a little nearer to the Point: Why does God exclude the Impure out of Heaven? Shall we ſay barely, becauſe it pleaſes Him to do it; and that He thinks it not fit to admit them, though there is nothing to hinder it, if He would? This Anſwer is by no means ſatisfactory. The Notion we have of God, as a Being infinitely Good, perfectly Wiſe, and ſuperlatively Juſt, directs to think otherwiſe, and to argue with ourſelves, That if God has eſtabliſhed certain Laws, and enforced them by certain Puniſhments, it was becauſe the Happineſs of Mankind made it neceſſary ſuch Laws ſhould be impoſed upon them, and becauſe Puniſhments are the natural Conſequents of the Violation of his Commands. We

can never be happy any other way, but by the Obſervance of theſe Laws; and by the Breach of them, we make ourſelves neceſſarily miſerable. By doing what God enjoins, we fit ourſelves, as becomes Reaſonable Creatures, for the Poſſeſſion of the Sovereign Good, which is God, and bring ourſelves nearer to him; but by Diſobedience to his Divine Laws, we turn away from God and our ſupreme Felicity.

Let us therefore meditate and weigh well with ourſelves what the Scripture conſtantly teaches; namely, That * *God will render to every one according to his doings:* That † *we ſhall receive in the other Life, according to the Good or Ill we ſhall have done here:* That ‖ *each one ſhall reap in the other World, that which he ſhall have done in this:* And that ‡ *without Holineſs, none ſhall ſee the Lord.* All which Paſſages perhaps will naturally put us in mind, that our future Eternal State depends upon our Behaviour at preſent; and there is ſuch a natural and neceſſary Relation betwixt what we are now, and what we ſhall be hereafter, that without getting ourſelves into a good Diſpoſition in this Life, we never ſhall, never can be, happy in the other. And that ſince Chaſtity is a Diſpoſition that God exacts of us, our Hope and Expectation of that Bleſſed State, muſt be a moſt powerful Motive to the Practice of this Virtue.

* Rom. 2. 6.
† 2 Cor. 5. 10.
‖ Gal. 6. 7, 8.
‡ Heb. 12. 14.

To the end we may enjoy the Heavenly Felicity, we muſt receive and ſtedfaſtly believe the Promiſes which are made to us by *Jeſus Chriſt*; and muſt ſearch after it, deſire it, and put a high value upon it. Becauſe, Man being endued with Reaſon, no Good, how great ſoever, can make him happy, unleſs he ſeek it, and believe he ſhall find his Account in it. And whoſoever therefore, inſtead of ſetting his Affections upon thoſe Heavenly Treaſures which the Goſpel ſets before him,

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places them rather upon the Earth, and its vain Delights, hereby incapacitates himſelf for aſpiring after the Bliſs and Glory of the other World; and ſo much the more, becauſe the Heavenly State, and the Pleaſures of the Fleſh, are of a quite different Nature. It is upon this Conſideration our Bleſſed Saviour declares, That * *our Heart will neceſſarily be where our Treaſure is,* and that † *we cannot ſerve two Maſters.* As his Apoſtle St. *John* alſo affirms, That ‖ *if any man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him.* As a Drunkard or Profligate Perſon is unable to taſte the Satisfaction a Wiſe Man finds in the Search and Knowledge of the Truth; ſo he that minds nothing but his Senſual Delights, as knowing no other Pleaſures, can never reliſh thoſe Entertainments which are not only of a different, but quite oppoſite Nature, ſuch as are Spiritual and Heavenly Pleaſures.

* Mat. 6. 21. † *Ver.* 24. ‖ 1 S. Joh. 2. 15.

If the Felicity we aim at were to be a Corporal Felicity, the Habits and Diſpoſitions which are contracted by a Licentious courſe of Life, would be no impediment to the Poſſeſſion of it; and ſo a Love of Senſual Pleaſures would be in ſome ſort pardonable. But Chriſtians are not to believe like thoſe Infidels who place their Carnal Pleaſures amongſt the Bleſſings of Paradiſe. We have Hopes of another nature, and expect a Divine and Spiritual Paradiſe; and are well aſſured, that after the Reſurrection, the Pleaſures of Senſe ſhall be at an end. Our Lord himſelf has told us, That ‡ *then People ſhall neither Marry, nor be given in Marriage, but ſhall be as the Angels of God.* And we have all therefore abundant reaſon to prepare ourſelves for this State, to aſpire after it, and to get as near it as we can. A Hope to be with God, to ſee Him as He is, to be with Jeſus Chriſt, and with the Holy Angels, to be employed in Exerciſes wholly Spiritual and Heavenly, and in the

‡ S. Luke 20. 35.

Contemplation of the marvellous Works of the Lord, ſuch a Hope can never be well fixed in a Heart, where Corruption and a Love of Senſuality reign. This Hope calls for pure and virgin Hearts, chaſt and innocent Souls; and to this purpoſe may be applied what is ſaid in a different ſenſe, *Rev.* xiv. 4. *Theſe who are not defiled with Women, but are Virgins, ſhall follow the Lamb whereſoever he goeth, theſe were redeemed from among Men, to be the Firſt-fruits to God and to the Lamb: Theſe ſhall dwell in the Temple of God, and be Kings and Prieſts to all Eternity.*

Theſe are the chief Motives to Chaſtity; which, were they taken either from uncertain Conjectures, or Conſiderations of little Importance, it were more excuſable not to be prevailed upon by them. But this is not the Caſe: For nothing can poſſibly be propoſed that is more certain, or of greater conſequence. There is nothing in the World more certain than theſe great Truths; That we ſhall one day die; That yet we ſhall not die like the Beaſts, but have a Soul which dies not with the Body; That there is to be another Life after this, when our Bodies ſhall be raiſed from Death, and we ſhall all be brought to Judgment: and laſtly, That after this Judgment, we ſhall live eternally either in Miſery or Glory. Theſe are indiſputable Truths, and they are likewiſe of the higheſt moment and concern to us. All other Conſiderations are of very little weight, and next to nothing, in reſpect of Theſe.

Wherefore, ſeeing there is no acting like Rational Creatures, without giving way to the ſtrongeſt Motives, thoſe who are not prevailed upon by theſe which I have mention'd, though ſo preſſing, and of ſuch weighty importance, ſhould be ſure they have other Reaſons and Motives of greater force to overbalance them. But

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what can theſe be? Or, how comes it about that Senſualiſts are ſo wedded to their Impurity, in ſpite of all that is urged to reclaim them from it? They can pretend but one reaſon for it, and that is, brutiſh Pleaſure, ſuch a groſs and ſenſual Inclination as themſelves are aſhamed of. But is this a Temptation fit to be compared with thoſe weighty and important Conſiderations, which are drawn from the Will of Almighty God, his Preſence with us, the Life and Death of our Bleſſed Lord, the Honour of the Chriſtian Name, our own Death, and all that is to follow after it? Are all theſe Arguments to be looked upon as of no force, and to be deſpiſed, and thrown aſide? Is it the part of a Man, to ſhut his Eyes againſt all Means of Conviction, to hearken to nothing that can be ſaid, but, for the Satisfaction of his Luſts, to run headlong upon certain and irretrievable Ruin? This is an Exceſs of Blindneſs that were hardly to be conceived, and whereof Mankind were not capable, if they would but ſeriouſly attend to the Motives they have to Chaſtity. It is moſt certain, People do not give themſelves to Impurity, for any other cauſe, than that theſe Motives are not well impreſſed upon their Minds; the proper Means of Chaſtity being to think of them ſeriouſly and often.

SECTION III.

Of the Means to be uſed in order to CHASTITY.

CHAP. I.

That there are Means of being Chaſt, and that this Vertue is attainable by their Help.

AFTER having in the preceding Section propoſed the principal Motives to Chaſtity, I am in this to treat of the Means to be made uſe of in order to it.

And here I take it to be incumbent upon me, in the firſt place to prove, that it is not at all impoſſible to be Chaſt. I muſt not ſay that all theſe Doctrines of Purity are laudable and juſt, but withal that it is difficult to reduce them to Practice, and Means muſt be found out for enabling Perſons to obſerve them, this being above their Capacity, and a Task fitter for Angels than Men. This is the Libertines Plea whereby they ſeek to excuſe their Diſobedience to the Laws of the Goſpel; but nothing can be ſaid more idly, or more falſly, or more injuriouſly to God and the Chriſtian Religion.

This one Conſideration, That God enjoins Chaſtity, is an invincible Proof that People may attain to it. It is by no means to be imagined that God

God is unjuſt, or will ſtrictly and under pain of eternal Damnation command the Obſervation of ſuch Duties as he knows to be utterly above our Power. No, he is too Good, too great a Lover of Equity to impoſe ſuch Impoſſibilities upon his Servants. There are Means of performing what he enjoyns, ſure Means of doing it, and the uſe of which is not very difficult. And as it is He who has ordered theſe Means, ſo has he engaged himſelf to ſecond them with his Bleſſing, whenſoever we heartily ſet ourſelves to obey Him.

It is ſtrange that any who call themſelves Chriſtians ſhould make a queſtion of this. We have ſeen that the very Heathens have believed Chaſtity to be a practicable Virtue. The Precepts of their Wiſemen, and the Examples of Continence that occur in Ancient Hiſtories ſuppoſe it. And ſhall Chriſtians have ſo mean an Opinion of their Lord's Doctrine, and the Efficacy of his Grace, as to think that People cannot however live in Purity?

Yet it muſt be granted that this Duty is not alike eaſy to all ſorts of Perſons; and ſome find conſiderable Trouble in it. But ſo is it in all the other Duties of Morality. There are ſome who, whether from their natural Temper and Conſtitution, or from the bad Habits they have contracted, are violently preſſed on to certain Paſſions, and muſt be at pains with themſelves before they can refrain from them. For inſtance there are thoſe whom an eager Temper and fulneſs of Heat, together with an ill Habit too long indulg'd, have render'd ſo prone to Anger, that they muſt be very diligent and watchful, and always upon their guard, or they will not be able to avoid it. Nevertheleſs it will ill become theſe to pretend this for their Excuſe; for ſo there is no Sinner but would be able to vindicate himſelf. Let him but

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be throughly engaged before-hand in any Habit of Vice, or ſubject to any Paſſion to ſuch or ſuch a Degree, and then he may take his Liberty, and it will not only be to no purpoſe, but will be unfair to go about to oblige him to a Reformation, and to threaten or puniſh him if he refuſe it.

I yield that divers are ſtrongly preſſed to Impurity. But in the firſt place it cannot be concluded from hence, that there are no Means of preſerving themſelves from this Paſſion. If they brought themſelves into this Eſtate by their own Fault, and for want of uſing the Means that were afforded them in order to Chaſtity, this is no Evidence that theſe Means are not ſufficient for their purpoſe. The Caſe is the ſame here, as if a Man had fallen into a mortal Fit of Sickneſs, by not uſing certain Preſervatives or Remedies; which does not ſhew that he had no Means of Preventing this Sickneſs, but only that he did not make a right Uſe of them. I ſay, in the next place, That God has ordained a proper Means and Remedy for ſuch, whereby to avoid the Exceſſes of the Fleſh, which is Marriage, as St. *Paul* teaches, 1 *Cor.* vii. But I add farther in relation to thoſe who are already entangled in this dangerous Paſſion, and whoſe Return to Chaſtity appears very difficult, that they may yet recover themſelves, and many have actually done it. It is true they will find it troubleſom at firſt; but then they ſhould remember that it is but reaſonable for them to croſs their own Inclinations, and bear with ſome Inconvenience, to preſerve themſelves from Deſtruction. And again, all this Trouble will grow leſs in time, and by the Uſe of theſe Means they will every day become eaſier, as I hope to ſhew very plainly.

I lay this down then as a Principle, that there are Means of being Chaſt; and that whoſoever ſhall make the Trial, will quickly find the Benefit of

of them. As for thoſe that will not uſe them, who will do nothing to help themſelves, will not Pray, nor Faſt, nor keep out of the way of Temptations, nor Watch over themſelves, nor Croſs themſelves in any thing, which is the Caſe with moſt of the Unclean; theſe, I own, will never attain to Chaſtity, but then they have none but themſelves to blame for it. It is their own Fault, and not any Defect in their Religion, that they are in this Condition: And their wilful Negligence will not hinder but that there may be ſufficient Means of making the Practice of this Vertue not only Poſſible, but Eaſie.

CHAP. II.

What is to be done, in order to Chaſtity; and firſt, of Holy Exerciſes.

THere are two General Means of acquiring Chaſtity; namely, Holy Exerciſes, and Watchfulneſs againſt Temptations.

The Exerciſes of Piety and Devotion, are an excellent Preſervative againſt Impurity, and moſt effectual Helps towards becoming Chaſt. By which I do not mean barely External and Corporeal Exerciſes, ſuch as are thoſe of moſt Chriſtians, which conſiſt only in the Recital of ſome Prayers, the Reading ſome good Diſcourſe, being preſent at Religious Aſſemblies, and attending the Publick Worſhip of God. Which Outward Acts and Duties of Religion are both uſeful and neceſſary, but yet cannot, without a great Miſtake, be thought to be ſo of themſelves, and that they are ſufficient to gain a Man Acceptance with God.

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So far from this, that bare Outward Devotions do but ſet him at a greater diſtance from God, and defile the Conſcience. Here therefore I mean, an Interior Devotion, ſuch Acts of Piety as come from the Heart, and are accompanied with a ſincere Deſire and Endeavour to pleaſe God, and and attain to a real Purity. Without this Deſign, all a Man does will ſtand him in no ſtead.

There are Three Pious Exerciſes that are more eſpecially uſeful, in order to the Virtue we are treating of; and they are, Prayer, Reading, and Meditation.

I. He that would be Chaſt, muſt Pray often; Prayer being a moſt effectual Remedy againſt Temptations to Impurity, as having a two-fold Uſe for Purifying the Heart. On the one hand, by Prayer, we obtain of God the Spirit of Purity, and Ability to withſtand the Deſires of the Fleſh; and prevail with Him to aſſiſt us, and to preſerve us from many Temptations. On the other hand, it is impoſſible that Application and Intercourſe with God ſhould not make us Pure. A Cuſtom of ſpeaking to Him who is Holineſs itſelf, of diſcovering our Hearts to Him, and appearing in his Preſence, will make us Wiſe and Circumſpect. When a Man is about to preſent himſelf before the Lord, or when he goes out from his Divine Preſence, he will not dare to allow himſelf in any Pollution, nor will be at that time ſuſceptible of the Impreſſions of Senſuality: The Comfort he has found in the Exerciſe of Prayer, the Satisfaction ſo pure and ſolid which he enjoys at ſuch a time, makes him leſs attentive to the ſhameful and tranſient Delights of Sin. Thus Prayer ſerves very much to Strengthen and Purifie the Soul.

Wherefore, ſo many of you as deſire to live Chaſtly, preſent yourſelves often before God, lift up your Hearts frequently to Him; put up to Him,

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at every turn, and with great earneſtneſs, that Prayer of *David*, Pſal. li. 10. *Create in me, O Lord, a clean Heart.* Let this be your firſt Thought when you awake in the Morning; intermix this Prayer with your Buſineſs; in the midſt of your Work have ſuch Ejaculations; and, though ſhort, they will not fail of being highly beneficial. Do this when you find yourſelves free and undiſturb'd with evil Thoughts; and when theſe aſſault you, double your Prayers. Uſe the ſame Courſe at Night, before you betake yourſelves to Reſt; and again whenſoever you lie awake: So will it become habitual to you to behave yourſelves as in the Preſence of God; your Souls will become Pure, and your Temptations will either keep at a diſtance, or at leaſt will loſe a great part of their Force.

But now if you would have your Prayers produce this happy Effect, you muſt Pray with Faith, and through *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord; and muſt be fully perſuaded that God will grant the Favour you beg of Him, provided you do your part for obtaining it. This you muſt believe, and ſtedfaſtly too, becauſe hereupon depends the Efficacy of your Prayers, *If any one lack Wiſdom*, (ſays St. *James*, ch. i. 6.) *let him ask it of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not: but let him ask in Faith, nothing wavering.* And it is our Bleſſed Saviour's own Promiſe, St. *Matth.* xxii. 22. *All things whatſoever ye ſhall ask in Prayer, believing, ye ſhall receive.* That is a fruitleſs Prayer, which is offered up without this Faith, and at all adventures, and only by the Lips, without minding whether it is like to ſucceed or not.

And let not the faintneſs of your Deſires diſcourage you: Ceaſe not to make your Supplications to the Lord, how weak and defective ſoever they be, provided you be ſincere in them. Offer them up

up with Confuſion and a profound Humility, and beſeech Him, in the Name of *Jeſus Chriſt*, to pity your Infirmities. God is of himſelf ſo Good, and ſo ready to do Good to Mankind, that He never fails to anſwer thoſe who invoke him with any meaſure of Sincerity. If you take this Courſe, you will quickly find the benefit of your Prayers, and will ſee cauſe to join returns of Thanks with them, and to bleſs God, when you feel the Bonds that had tied you ſo faſt to the Fleſh, and to your Senſes, begin to fall off, and that the Allurements of Pleaſures are nothing ſo ſtrong as formerly: And thenceforward you will go on more eaſily, and be continually making new Improvements in Chaſtity.

II. The Second Pious Exerciſe I would recommend, is Reading. And this is advantageous upon divers Accounts. It employs Perſons, and hereby is an uſeful Remedy againſt Evil Thoughts. It ſuggeſts Good Meditations, and affords ſuch Reflections as we ſhould not otherwiſe make; it excites Devotion; it takes off our Minds from Senſible things, and raiſes them up to Spiritual: In a word, it is a great help to Piety, ſuppoſing what is read to be Good and Inſtructive. But for this Purpoſe, of all Authors whatſoever, there is none comparable to the Holy Scriptures: For beſides the Holineſs of what is contained in theſe Sacred Volumes, the Authority of Almighty God ſpeaking in them, challenges a particular Attention and Reſpect. The whole Tendency of the Scripture, is to make Perſons Spiritual; and to this end, it propoſes to them a great number of Precepts, Examples, and Motives excellently conducing to cleanſe them from the Pollutions of the Fleſh. St. *Chryſoſtom* * attributes ſo great Power

* Conc. 3. de Lazaro.

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to the Scripture, in reſpect to Chaſtity, that he ſays, A bare Sight, or Touching of the Goſpel, is enough to drive away Evil Thoughts. Which doubtleſs he ſaid, upon account of the Reverence and Fear that is apt to ariſe in the Mind, upon the appearance of this Divine Book.

To the Reading of the Word of God, that of other Books may be uſefully added. And in chuſing of theſe, I would adviſe every one to ſelect thoſe which he obſerves to affect him moſt, and to ſtick to them. When a Book has been read over, and the Reader finds himſelf improved by it, it ſhould be read over again and again; for it is a great Miſtake, to think, the beſt way of profiting by Books, to lie in reading a multitude of them; and they that are always paſſing from one Book to another, make ordinarily but ſmall Improvements in Piety.

Wherefore, I wiſh thoſe who find it neceſſary to take Pains that they may become Chaſt, would impoſe it as a conſtant Task upon themſelves, to read ſomething every Day, to ſet aſide ſome certain Time for this, and eſpecially that they would ſpend part of all their Days and Times of Devotion in this Employment. But I have one particular Direction to give concerning Reading, which is, that ſuch as find in themſelves an indiſpoſition to this Exerciſe, would ſtrive hard to overcome it. People are not always enclined to Reading; but I beg of them however not to forbear it: They would do well to offer violence to themſelves in this Caſe; and they may aſſure themſelves no Hurt can come of it, but very great Good may. If Reading ſerv'd only to employ the Mind, yet ſo it were worth the while. Sometimes a Reading begun without Deſign, and with ſome Unwillingneſs, ſerves to excite good Thoughts, and inſpire

inſpire the Mind with ſuch Sentiments as it would not otherwiſe have had.

III. Meditation, is another very good Means of Purifying the Soul. It excites and recalls into the Mind divers good Reflections, prevents Temptations and Evil Thoughts; and whenever they intrude, it abates their Force. And if any one would know what is a proper Subject for his Meditation; I anſwer, There are very many, very proper and uſeful; and that in general, there is no Matter of Religion and Piety, which may not be revolved in our Minds to Advantage. It may be very uſeful alſo to meditate upon all that has been diſcourſed in this Treatiſe, upon both Uncleanneſs, and Chaſtity. But there are ſome particular Meditations that have a peculiar Virtue for diſſuading from Pollution. Such is, the Conſideration of God's Preſence. And we ſhould therefore habituate ourſelves to think frequently of it, remembring and well weighing with ourſelves, that we are always in His Sight. I wiſh Perſons would often call to mind that great Truth, That God is near them; That he ſpeaks to them, exhorts, encourages them, makes Promiſes, and denounces Threatnings; That he tries them, and ſays this and that to invite them to Purity. For all this he does to reclaim People from Sin. Theſe Thoughts would fill them with a Religious Fear; and, conſidering themſelves as before God, they would not dare to take the liberty of Defiling themſelves. Of ſuch mighty Influence is a Fear of God, and Reverence for his Preſence. *It is by the Fear of the Lord, that Men depart from Evil*, Prov. xvi. 6.

Another proper Subject for Meditation, and a likely Means of making the Soul Chaſt, is the Life and Sufferings of our Saviour *Chriſt*. The Life of

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our Saviour and his Cross, are a powerful Motive, not to seek our own Ease, and the Satisfaction of our Senses in this World.

Our Meditations may be also very profitably employed about the Ends of Mankind, their Death, Resurrection, Judgment, and Heaven, and Hell. These are Objects that should be always present to us, and have an excellent Tendency to keep us from Impurity. The Thoughts of Death, which puts an end to all our Delights here, and not only lays the Body in the Grave, but turns it into a Nest of Worms, must necessarily abate the Allurements of Sensual Pleasures. The Thoughts of the Resurrection, will force us to have a regard to our Bodies, and to preserve them Pure. Those of Judgment, will strike us with Dread and Terror. That of Hell, will shew the Temptations of Lust to be very dangerous, and put us upon trying all ways for avoiding them. And the Thoughts of Heaven, and its unconceivable Felicity, will put us upon renouncing most heartily those destructive and shameful Pleasures, the short enjoyment of which, would for ever shut us out from this incomparably Blessed State. In fine, The Consideration of that Eternity, which every day draws nearer, and wherein we know not how very soon we may be placed, swallows up our Thoughts in such a manner, that it will suffer us no longer to hearken to the Enticements of Vain Pleasures, but will cause us to look upon the Delights and the Advantages of this Life as nothing worth.

These are the chief Subjects of Meditation, which may serve for a Remedy against Impurity, and a Means of obtaining Chastity. I beg leave to add to what I have said, That by Meditation, I do not understand only, a continued Course of Attention for some time together, but such Meditations likewise as are very short, or rather are

only good Reflections, and holy Thoughts. Men may allow more or leſs Time to Meditation, according to their preſent Circumſtances, and the Leaſure they have for it. But it is of neceſſity that ſome Time be ſet a-part for it; and that, to this Purpoſe, ſome Intermiſſions be contrived in the midſt of our worldly Affairs, wherein the Soul being at liberty, and having recollected itſelf, may have leaſure for, and ſeriouſly employ itſelf in theſe holy Thoughts, and ſo may conſiderably improve itſelf. Beſides this, Perſons ſhould likewiſe accuſtom themſelves frequently to reflect upon ſomething that is good, in the midſt of their worldly Employments, and often to recall into their minds ſuch Thoughts as are uſeful for Purifying their Hearts. This may be done, without interrupting their own neceſſary Affairs and Occupations, and a habit of doing it may be eaſily acquired. And Labourers, and Artificers, and ſuch others as have their Bodies ordinarily at work, have yet this advantage; that whilſt thus employed, they have nothing that can hinder their entertaining themſelves with good Thoughts.

To conclude this Chapter; It is of the higheſt Conſequence to Chaſtity, that the Time which is not ſpent in Sleep at Night and whilſt we are in Bed, be employed in Meditation. This ſhould the rather be obſerved, becauſe Perſons are then more at liberty; and ſhould therefore more eſpecially be upon their guard, for fear of being ſurprized by evil Thoughts and Temptations.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the Care that is to be taken for avoiding Temptations.

WHatſoever the Effect of Holy Exerciſes be, for diſpoſing Perſons to Chaſtity, they muſt neceſſarily be accompanied with our own Care and Pains: And this is no more than All will infallibly apply themſelves to, if they once ſincerely ſet about theſe Exerciſes of Piety; it not being poſſible for a Man heartily to deſire a thing, without being willing to take ſome Pains for obtaining it. And here therefore I am to ſhew, what courſe is to be taken for preſerving the Soul and Body in Purity.

Our Endeavours then muſt be two-fold. For as there are two ſorts of Remedies, either Preventive, which a Man uſes for fear of being Sick, or Reſtorative, and which are deſigned for his Recovery after his Diſeaſe has ſeized him; ſo are there two different Methods to be purſued againſt Impurity, the one for Preventing Temptations, and the other when under them. I ſhall treat of the former of theſe in this Chapter and the two next.

I. One of the chief Means of Defence againſt Temptations to Impurity, is a Diſtruſt of ourſelves. This Diſtruſt proceeds from an opinion of our own Weakneſs, and a fear of being ſurprized and enſnared by Temptations. Nor is there any one who has not too juſt reaſon to diſtruſt himſelf. It were meer Folly to imagine, that People ſhall never be expoſed to Temptations, or ſhall certainly be able to overcome them

if they be. When once any preſume this of themſelves, they are undone; for thenceforward they are no more upon their guard, but grow negligent, and ſo a Temptation is ſure to prevail againſt them: Whereas, did they diſtruſt their own Strength, and had an humble opinion of themſelves, they would not be able to ſleep in ſecurity. Diffidence, makes Perſons Wiſe, Vigilant, Circumſpect, inſpires them with Fear, and makes them avoid the Occaſions of Falling. On the other ſide, it directs them to put their Truſt in God alone, and to apply to Him for the Aſſiſtance they ſtand in need of: And if God be on their ſide, they will eaſily ſubdue their evil Deſires.

But none have more reaſon to diſtruſt themſelves, than thoſe who are enclinable to Impurity, and have often fallen into it, one way or other. Theſe cannot attend too diligently to this Admonition. Though they ſeem to have their Paſſions allayed, they are not however to think themſelves ſafe. Many have fallen, and loſt the fruits of their firſt Attempts, by a falſe Confidence, and by believing too ſoon and too eaſily, that they had already got the Maſtery over themſelves. Having obſerved in themſelves ſome beginnings of Chaſtity, ſome declenſion of the Heat of Luſt, and having been ſome days, or for ſome time, without feeling the returns of their Paſſion, they thought they had already attained to Purity: whereas, had they tarried a while longer, they would have found themſelves very much deceived; there being nothing wanting but an Object or Temptation, and poſſibly a very light one, to reduce them to their former State. Luſt is often-times like a Fire hid under Aſhes, which breaks out again with great violence in an inſtant, and when it is thought entirely extinct. Wherefore,

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that ſuch who are not well confirmed in Purity, may be benefited by this Advice, their State ſhould be a State of continual Diffidence and Fear, but yet ſuch as is accompanied with Hope and Courage. For it is abſolutely neceſſary for them not to be out of heart.

II. This Diſtruſt will produce Vigilance, which is a ſecond Means of Defence againſt impure Temptations; and to which the Goſpel invites. Our Bleſſed Lord himſelf often exhorts to watch; and the State we are in in this World obliges us to be inceſſantly upon our guard. And Watchfulneſs is eſpecially neceſſary with reſpect to the Paſſion we are treating of; which is lively and quick, and though its Beginnings may ſeem weak, it makes a great Progreſs, and does great Miſchief in a Moment. Let it but lie aſleep for a ſmall time, and it will beget great Falls. It was want of Vigilance made *David* ſin; who fell becauſe he did not watch over himſelf.

Now one of the principal Duties of Vigilance, and one of the greateſt Advantages it brings, is the avoiding Temptations. The firſt and moſt certain Means of ſecuring ourſelves againſt Sin, is to keep off from whatever might probably betray us into it. He that being expoſed to Temptation takes care to reſiſt it, does well; but does it not without ſome Struggle and Danger. And it had been much ſafer to have avoided the Temptation and Conflict.

For avoiding Temptations they ſhould be foreſeen and taken notice of. It has been already ſhewn what are the Allurements to Uncleanneſs, and every ones buſineſs is to ſhun theſe Temptations and Occaſions as much as poſſibly he can. I am ſenſible he cannot always eſcape them wholly, but in a good meaſure he may, and then he will be in far leſs Danger from them. For example,

He that deſires to be Chaſt, muſt fly Idleneſs, and be always ſome way well employed; he muſt beware of Intemperance, and live very ſoberly; he muſt be very moderate in his Sleep, and in things permitted him; muſt not ſeek too much the Conveniences of Life; muſt avoid Luxury and any Diverſions wherein is Exceſs. He muſt refrain from going to any Places where he may be like to hear or ſee any thing that may draw him aſide; and muſt not read any obſcene or wanton Books. But above all things he muſt govern his Eyes with great care, and keep out of the Company of Perſons whom he cannot look upon without Danger. He muſt never be familiar with them, either in his Actions or Diſcourſe, nor uſe any Toying and Wantonneſs, but be Grave and Circumſpect; and in one word, muſt be upon his guard againſt whatever might occaſion any Senſual Thoughts or Deſires.

But that this Practice may have its wiſhed Succeſs, Two things are to be taken care of. Firſt that Perſons be very exact, and very ſcrupulous, as to every thing that leads to Impurity, and that they do not take too much Liberty, under any vain Pretences. Men impoſe upon themſelves divers ways. Sometimes they think things to be inconſiderable; wherein they deceive themſelves, not remembring that little things are here of great conſequence, and cannot be neglected without Damage to Chaſtity, as every one may have obſerved. Some things they look upon as innocent, and that there is no Evil or Danger in venturing upon them; yet theſe ſame things have oftentimes been the Occaſions of great Falls. It is eaſy to be deceived in point of Converſation. One looks upon another of the other Sex, and thinks there is nothing unlawful in this, and that here is nothing with reſpect to either of them but Eſteem and Friend-

Friendſhip; perhaps Religion too had at firſt ſome concurrence towards the Kindneſſes and Diſcourſes that paſs between them; yet by this means a Paſſion has inſenſibly taken hold of them. And the caſe is the ſame with many other matters that are thought innocent.

The other thing I would have obſerv'd is, that ſeeing Perſons are not always expoſed to all the forementioned Temptations, and they have not all the ſame force upon all ſorts of Perſons, every one ſhould make trial of himſelf to ſee by which he is in moſt danger of falling, which Objects make moſt Impreſſion upon him, and upon what occaſions he is moſt apt to be ſeized with ſenſual Thoughts. There are ſome who are very orderly by themſelves, but when they go abroad, the diverſity of Objects they meet with diſcompoſes them, and they cannot be in Company without forgetting themſelves. Such ſhould be very wary, and live retired. There are others who when Sober are Wiſe and Chaſt, but who in their Cups or after a Feaſt are not able to contain themſelves within the Bounds of Modeſty. Theſe are oblig'd upon this particular account, beſides thoſe other Reaſons which engage Chriſtians to live in Sobriety, to be conſtantly upon their guard againſt Intemperance. Others again there are, who cannot go into ſome Places, or ſee ſome Perſons without being enſnared by ſome impure Paſſion. Theſe ſhould be ſure always to avoid ſuch Places and Perſons. And in this caſe it may be requiſite to break off theſe Converſations, in ſuch a manner as may prevent our ever renewing them for the future. Thus muſt every one apply himſelf, to diſcover and avoid whatever may be like to kindle any ill Deſires in him. But ah! how very different is the ordinary courſe of Mankind, who ſeek out, inſtead of ſhunning theſe Occaſions! Many know

very well what it is that drives them on to Sin; they know they cannot frequent the Company of ſuch or ſuch Perſons, without being ſubject to ſome unlawful Deſires, and yet they frequent it. They have found by Experience that the reading of ſome Books are a Poiſon to them, and yet they will not forbear it. They know before-hand that Wine is apt to have an ill Effect upon them, and make them diſorderly, and yet they will not keep themſelves ſober. When any thus put themſelves in the way of a Temptation, and willingly caſt themſelves upon it, it is not in their power not to yield to it.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Care to be taken with reſpect to the Body.

THat we may be ſafe from Temptations, our chief Care muſt be to watch over ourſelves; the Cauſe and Original of Evil being in ourſelves; as St. *James* witneſſes, 1 St. *Ja.* i. 14. *Every one is tempted, when he is drawn aſide of his own Luſts and enticed.* Occaſions and Objects ſeduce us not but through our own Fault. Nor again, do Temptations come always from without; they often proceed from ourſelves, without the Intervention of Objects. So that our chief Care is to be laid out upon ourſelves, and this with reſpect either to our Bodies, or to our Souls. The Body being the principal Fountain of Impurity, Luſts are therefore called Bodily or Carnal; and St. *Paul* makes Chaſtity to conſiſt in poſſeſſing the Body in Sanctification. And accordingly there is no preſer-

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ving Chaſtity, without governing the Body. And therefore my Buſineſs in this Chapter ſhall be to ſhew what is to be done in this reſpect.

I. My Firſt Advice is concerning its Diet; and it calls for an eſpecial Attention from all that find themſelves inclined to Senſuality. Now here the Goſpel directs two Duties, Sobriety and Faſting.

1. I have already ſhewn, when I was conſidering the Cauſes of Uncleanneſs, that Intemperance in Eating and Drinking is one of the chief Cauſes of this Sin; and that conſequently all that would be chaſt, muſt neceſſarily be ſober. Sobriety allays the Heat of Paſſions, that have been raiſed by too great Abundance, and too great Activity of the Blood and animal Spirits. By this Virtue it is that People become accuſtomed to command their own Appetites, and put themſelves in a condition to reſiſt their other Paſſions. But when I ſay, Perſons muſt be Sober, I do not mean they muſt only forbear being Drunk, and abſtain from Gluttony, and other Exceſs of Riot; they muſt farther beware of being dainty, and not ſeek after what pleaſes the Taſte and Senſes, but to Eat and Drink moderately, and to uſe themſelves to the plaineſt Sort of Food.

2. And yet the Goſpel proceeds farther, enjoining not only Abſtemiouſneſs, but Faſting. Which has always been look'd upon as an excellent Inſtrument of Mortification of the Fleſh; and was accordingly both recommended and practiſed by the Prophets and the *Jews*, by our bleſſed Saviour, by his Apoſtles, by the Primitive Chriſtians, and by the whole Church. Abſtinence from Meat and Drink is certainly a Help to Chaſtity. But then I mean a rational Abſtinence ſuited to every-one's preſent State and Need. It weakens the Body, and ſo is of great uſe for beating down the Paſſions.

Paſſions. Every one feels that he is better able to reſiſt his inordinate Deſires, when he has from time to time denied his Body, not only Superfluities, but moreover ſome part of what is Neceſſary. A Government of our Appetites is of abſolute neceſſity in order to the Practice of this Virtue; but when a Man will not endure to croſs himſelf in this, he will find a great deal of Trouble in doing it in other things. In giving the Body always whatever it demands as neceſſary, it is eaſy to grant it what is ſuperfluous, and after that even what is forbidden. It is natural to have the like Complaiſance for the Body in other things likewiſe, as well as in what relates to Food; and it is therefore needful to betake ourſelves to Abſtinence, if we would tame the Paſſions of the Fleſh. If the Impure would make uſe of this Means, they would preſently experiment the Advantage of it. But it is a great Unhappineſs, that ſuch vaſt Numbers entirely neglect it to that degree, that the greateſt part have no Notion of this Duty, nor think that they ever ought to croſs themſelves in Meat or Drink, and ſometimes totally to refrain from them. This is one of the Cauſes of Licentiouſneſs, and in particular of Uncleanneſs. Men will be wiſer than God. Jeſus Chriſt has taught us how to mortify ourſelves, and accuſtom ourſelves to deny the Fleſh what it requires of us; and he has not preſcribed this without great Reaſon. His firſt Diſciples were ſo ſenſible of this, that they conſtantly made it the Matter of their Practice. And it is a melancholick Conſideration, That in our Days ſo few will be invited to imitate them in it.

II. Labour is another Means of promoting Chaſtity. And as we would not be drawn aſide by impure Deſires, it will extremely concern us to beware of Idleneſs. Too much Reſt makes People wanton; and it is too common for them that

that live without any Employment to be addicted to this Vice. But now Labour is an excellent Preſervative againſt it. This brings down the Powers of the Body, and dries up the Springs of many Temptations. Beſides that whilſt Men are buſied, vain Thoughts do not ſo eaſily creep into their Minds. Thus therefore ſhould every one order himſelf, though always with regard to his own Condition and Circumſtances. But generally thoſe that have a ſtrong Inclination to Senſuality, cannot do better than to employ themſelves as far as they are able, even to Pains, Fatigue, and Wearineſs, without ſparing the Body; and they will ſee this Paſſion will loſe much of its Strength.

III. A Third Means is, Mortification as to what concerns the Body and the Senſes, and comprehends in it two Duties.

The Firſt Duty is to refuſe the Body thoſe things that are pleaſing to it. I ſay this not only in relation to things forbidden, but I mean that Perſons ſhould mortify themſelves in what is permitted, and above all in what they have the moſt deſire for, as in Food, in certain Conveniences of Life, in Sleep, Cloaths, and lawful Pleaſures. In which Caſes the way to mortify oneſelf is by abſtaining from theſe things, if not altogether, at leaſt in part, ſo as not to uſe them too frequently, or take all the Liberty in them that might be without Sin, obſerving Moderation in the uſe of them, and never being too eagerly ſet upon them. I know not what more to ſay as to this Point, than that a Complaiſance for the Deſires of the Fleſh, is the deſtruction of Virtue and Chaſtity. A cockered and pampered Body is a Receptacle of evil Thoughts; and it is therefore of the higheſt Conſequence to regulate and mortify ourſelves in this reſpect.

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2. The other Duty of Mortification is ſometimes to contradict our own Inclinations, and accuſtom ourſelves to a painful and uneaſy Life. But herein Care muſt be taken to keep exactly in the middle between the Superſtition of ſuch as believe the Practice of exceſſive, and oftentimes idle and ridiculous Auſterities to be Meritorious, and the Indulgence of thoſe who know not what it is to ſuffer any thing that is painful and afflicting, willingly, and for their Spiritual Advantage. There is no particular Rule to be preſcribed in this Caſe, but each one muſt obſerve what ſuits with his Circumſtances, his Strength, and the Need he has of Mortfication. For the Neceſſity of Mortifying ourſelves is much greater in ſome than in others, and all are not alike qualified for taking this Method with themſelves. Some being of a weakly Conſtitution, may juſtly favour themſelves; whilſt Others whoſe Bodies are robuſt and healthy, muſt be leſs ſparing of themſelves. But whenſoever any find themſelves enclined to Luſt, and a vicious Temper of Mind, it is then high time for them to betake themſelves to this Courſe of Mortification, and make uſe of Faſting, Watching, and Labour; to Eat little, to take their Reſt only when forced to it by Wearineſs, and when their tired Limbs require it; and not always to Sleep ſo long as Nature would direct. Yet care muſt be taken not to favour the Body for falſe Reaſons, and under colour of Neceſſity, or that it is for their Health. Upon theſe Pretences Men often indulge themſelves in many things that they might well enough be without. They will not ſhorten their Reſt, nor take Pains, nor Faſt, for fear of ruining their Health; when would they fairly examine into the matter, they would diſcover that they herein plainly deceive themſelves. After all, it is always the ſafeſt courſe to provide for the moſt preſſing

preſſing Neceſſity. When the Soul is in danger, the Body is to be leſs favoured; it being far better that the Body ſuffer, than that the Soul be eternally ruined. But there is no need of this. God would not have us cruel to ourſelves; and it is certain, that we may Mortifie, take Pains, and Faſt without Murdering ourſelves. Beſides, it is obſervable, That ſuch who lead a mortify'd and ſevere Life, enjoy better health, and live longer, than thoſe who have a blind Complaiſance for the Body.

Where is the Chriſtian that makes any doubt of the Neceſſity of Mortification, after the Pattern St. *Paul* has left us of Faſting, who profeſſes of himſelf, 1 *Cor.* ix. 27. *I keep under my Body, and bring it into ſubjection.* And to prove here is meant ſuch Mortification, as conſiſts in abſtinence from Pleaſures, and a ſtrict Temperance, it is to be noted, that the Apoſtle produces the Example of Wreſtlers who obſerved great Continence, in relation both to their Food, and to their Pleaſures, and abſtained from many things that others allowed themſelves. Thus much theſe words import; * *He that wreſtles or fights, uſes Abſtinence, or Continence in all things.* And that Paſſage of *Plato* before cited, ſhews that this Continence of Wreſtlers, may be extended to whatever I have been treating of: It was, to mortifie himſelf, aſwell as to promote the Propagation of the Goſpel, that St. *Paul* choſe to ſuffer Hunger, Thirſt, Faſting, Watchings, Poverty, Heat, Cold, and divers other Inconveniences. If this great Apoſtle took this Courſe; Who will be ſo preſumptuous as to queſtion whether there be need of it? I conclude then, That it is a moſt effectual Means of ſecuring us from the Infection of impure Temptations, if

* Πᾶς ὁ ἀγωνιζόμενος πάντα ἐγκρατεύεται.

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we can but perſuade ourſelves to lead a Life of Self-denial. This kind of Life, though it ſeem ſevere, is the Foundation of the pureſt Joy, and moſt delightful Satisfactions. A Soul that inhabits a Body ſoftned with Pleaſures, is in a State of Slavery, and is the Prey of Paſſions and Remorſe; but that which dwells in a Body tamed and brought into ſubjection, is free, happy, quiet, is a true Ray of the Divine Eſſence, exempt from a thouſand hurtful Paſſions, a thouſand mean and ſhameful Deſigns, and a thouſand Griefs that befall ſuch as are not Maſters over their own Bodies.

IV. There is one thing more to be obſerved in relation to the Body, whereon alſo Chaſtity has a great dependance, and that is, the Government of the Eyes and Looks. This is an Aſſertion of great weight, and which I have already touched upon * in the former Part of this Treatiſe. I have cited alſo what our Lord Chriſt ſays of unclean Looks, St. *Matth.* ch. v. And thoſe words of *Job*, ch. xxxi. 1. *I have made a covenant with mine Eyes, not to look upon a Maid.* All that indulge themſelves in impure Thoughts, know by their own experience, that theſe begin almoſt always by the Sight. Here therefore are two things to be obſerved. The firſt, not to ſeek after Objects that may ſeduce us; they that do this, are firſt in the Temptation; they willingly expoſe themſelves to it, and ſo muſt needs fall by it. The ſecond is, not to fix our Eyes upon ſuch Objects when they come in our way, but inſtantly turn away from them. We cannot be too wary in this reſpect, but muſt arm ourſelves with a firm Reſolution, and muſt put it in execution, without taking time to conſider, ſo ſoon as ever the Occa-

* Sect. I. Ch. 7.

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ſion preſents itſelf; nothing being quicker than a Look, and the Impreſſion it makes upon the Heart; ſo that one Moment is Time enough for it to ſurprize us. One Look cauſed King *David's* dreadful Fall. Let every one therefore lay it down as a Law to himſelf, not to take the liberty to look at every thing that offers itſelf, not to fix his Eyes upon all the Perſons and Objects he meets with; and to keep his Senſes to himſelf.

Theſe are the principal Means to be uſed as to the Body, in order to Chaſtity, and there is none but ought to make what advantage he can of them; there being none of us but has a Body, and none therefore but ought to be afraid leſt this Body prove the Cauſe and Inſtrument of his Deſtruction. But the propereſt Seaſon for the Uſe of theſe Means, is in Youth, this being the Age wherein the Danger is greateſt, becauſe the Body being then in its full Strength, it is ſo much the more liable to corrupt the Soul, and draw it into the Exceſſes of Impurity. Then therefore is the Time of keeping under the Body. And this alſo will be a Means of preventing the Temptations of Uncleanneſs, and continuing Chaſt for ever after. And that we may the better improve what has been ſaid, it will be requiſite to add hereto the Reflections which were made in the Third Section of the former Part, Chap. 3; where I have ſhewn, Intemperance, Idleneſs, too great Care of the Body, and a Love of Pleaſures, to be the uſual Occaſions of Uncleanneſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Of the Cares which relate to the Soul.

WHat has been ſaid, does not ſo entirely relate to the Body; but that the Uſe of theſe Means will prove highly advantageous alſo to the Soul, and will ſerve to keep off many Temptations. But yet care is to be taken in ſome Inſtances that have a more particular relation to the Soul. If the Body be neceſſarily to be tamed, the Soul alſo is no leſs to be brought into ſubjection. And what is to be done to this end, may be reduced to theſe two Duties; ſtudying to put away Evil Thoughts, and labouring for Good ones.

I. Evil Thoughts may be put away, either by caſting them off as ſoon as ever they offer themſelves, (which will be the Subject of the next Chapter) or by preventing their firſt riſe. Which at firſt ſight appears a difficult Task, and really is ſo to thoſe that have contracted an ill habit of entertaining themſelves with theſe ſort of Thoughts. Such know not how to get rid of them, without great Foreſight; and it is what they ought earneſtly to labour at, till they have brought themſelves to that paſs, that they ſhall have ſtopt the Spring whence impure Thoughts inceſſantly flow. And theſe are ſome of the ways of ſucceeding in ſuch an Attempt.

1. Perſons ſave themſelves from multitudes of Evil Thoughts, when they avoid the Occaſions and Objects which are wont to produce them; (as I have ſhewn before.)

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2. Perſons ſhould accuſtom themſelves to fix their Mind, ſo as that it do not wander, nor be diſtracted. It is a wicked Liberty, to ſuffer the Imagination to rove after all ſorts of Objects, and to hearken to all the Thoughts that preſent themſelves. Whence it comes to paſs, that theſe Thoughts preſs ſuch on to divers Miſcarriages; and ſo much the more unavoidably, becauſe after they have once found the way to their Heart, they preſently become habitual, and ſo the more powerful upon this account. More eſpecially this happens, in thoſe Thoughts which gratifie their Senſuality; as is well known to great numbers of People, who have contracted this unhappy Habit. Such commonly entertain themſelves with divers fooliſh and wanton Imaginations; their Soul is full of corrupt and laſcivious Idea's, with which they are continually poiſon'd more and more, and kindle in themſelves more and more the Fire of Luſt. For Cure of this ſo great a Fault, and which, if not amended, will certainly ruine them, Perſons ſhould ſettle their Minds, and not accuſtom themſelves to think of too many things, nor buſie themſelves about what ſignifies nothing, or what is wicked. And for this cauſe, it is highly uſeful to govern well the Senſes, and particularly the Sight, to ſhun whatever makes the Thoughts go aſtray, not to be too free, and not to talk too much. Reading, Meditation, and good Diſcourſe, are very proper for fixing the Mind, and keeping it from wandring.

3. The Memory is alſo to be brought into Order, and taught, not to call back thoſe impure Notions and Matters that we may have read of, ſeen, or heard, or which we may have fanſied to ourſelves: All theſe things are to be blotted, as far as may be, out of the Mind; and if at any time they recurr to our Thoughts, great heed muſt be taken to prevent their ſtay there, and we

muſt ſpeedily eject them, and ſet ourſelves to think of ſomething elſe.

4. Curioſity being a frequent Cauſe of the Wandrings of the Minds and Heart; and a Deſire of ſatisfying it, being a great occaſion of Pollution, this alſo is to be guarded againſt. Men deſire to hear, ſee, read, know ſuch or ſuch things, which they take to be meer Matter of Curioſity, and that this Deſire is therefore wholly innocent; but would they ſeriouſly examine themſelves, they would diſcover ſome ſecret Paſſion that made them thus inquiſitive. Wherefore, whoſoever would be pure, muſt believe himſelf to be undoubtedly concern'd to reſiſt this vain, imprudent, and ſometimes carnal Curioſity, that makes us ſo earneſt to inform ourſelves of what is not at all neceſſary to be known.

II. But it is not enough to ward off Evil Thoughts: We muſt labour alſo to have Good ones; and to this end, muſt give them Entertainment when they preſent themſelvs, and muſt ſeek after them when they do not.

1. I ſay, in the firſt place, That we muſt be ready to admit of, and entertain them, whenever they preſent themſelves. And indeed, it contributes very much to the Purity of the Soul, to make a good Improvement of thoſe Moments wherein it is well diſpoſed. There are divers Circumſtances that bring good Thoughts into the Mind, and put it upon ſerious and profitable Reflections. As is eſpecially evident in Times of Affliction, or when Perſons apply themſelves to holy Exerciſes, to Reading, or to Prayer, or when all the Paſſions are quiet. When they find themſelves in any of theſe favourable Circumſtances, they muſt be very induſtrious to improve them aright, by cheriſhing theſe good Thoughts, dwelling upon them, retaining them as long as they can, and not letting their Minds wander after

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other Objects. Then is the Time for them to encourage themſelves in Chaſtity, by repreſenting to themſelves the Excellency and the Neceſſity of this Virtue, and conſidering how happy a Man is when he has got rid of a Voluptuous courſe of Life, and how miſerable and wretched whilſt he indulges himſelf in it. Then that is eaſie to him, which at another time would be accounted very difficult; and by a good Improvement of theſe ſhort Intervals, a conſiderable Progreſs may be made in Purity.

2. Since Good Thoughts are of ſuch advantage, care muſt be taken to raiſe them, and produce them as much as may be. This is worth taking Pains for: For Evil Thoughts ſpring up abundantly, and there are many things, both within us and without us, that eaſily give occaſion for them. Inſomuch, that unleſs due Care be had to ſtore ourſelves with good Thoughts, to ſet in oppoſition to ſo many vain and ſinful Thoughts, thoſe will be ſure to get the poſſeſſion of our Hearts. Now the Means of being furniſhed with Good Thoughts, are, Reading, Prayer, Religious Converſation, Acquaintance with thoſe that are good, and Retirement. It conduces alſo extremely to this Purpoſe, to ſettle our Minds, and govern our Imaginations, (as has been ſaid) ſo as that they may preſent us with no Idea's or Deſires but what are pure. Our Minds ſhould alſo have a ſtock of Arguments, for diſſuading from Impurity, and inviting to Chaſtity; by which means, we ſhould have a Fountain of good Thoughts within ourſelves. But it is eſpecially of great Advantage to follow theſe two Advices; namely, to have good Thoughts in the Morning as ſoon as we awake; and, to get a Habit of intermixing them with our other Affairs all the Day after.

I add farther, That it is ſingularly uſeful, to labour after Spiritual Pleaſures, and accuſtom our-

ſelves to a ſenſe of them; that ſo one Pleaſure may drive away another. I wiſh none would ever draw to himſelf too inviting a Scene of Corporal Pleaſures, nor would delude himſelf into a belief, that it is a peculiar happineſs to enjoy them. On the contrary, they are to be look'd upon as vain, tranſient, and dangerous. And Perſons would do well to reflect, that Death will one day ſtrip them of whatſoever they eſteem moſt charming in this World, and then all their Pleaſures will be at an end, and will leave nothing to thoſe who are moſt enamour'd of them, but cruel Remorſe. A Wiſe Man and a Chriſtian will often think upon this; and will call to mind, that he has a Spiritual and Immortal Soul, and is call'd to the Poſſeſſion of Bliſs and Glory. He will endeavour after thoſe true Pleaſures, thoſe pure Delights, and that inward Peace, which naturally flows from a Senſe of God's Favour, and an Expectation of the Heavenly Felicity. Theſe juſt and wiſe Reflections every one ſhould make, as being highly uſeful in order to an utter diſlike of the ignominious and ſinful Pleaſures of the Fleſh, and for baniſhing fooliſh Thoughts and ſenſual Imaginations, and raiſing the Soul to great Purity.

CHAP. VI.

Of what is to be done when under Temptations.

BY reducing to Practice, what has been diſcourſed in the foregoing Chapters, many Temptations are avoided; yet can they not all be ſo prevented, but that the moſt vigilant will be liable to them from time to time. Beſides that, there are multitudes, who, by having neglected the

the promotion of Chaſtity, and ſuffer'd themſelves to be enticed to Senſuality, are aſſaulted by frequent returns of this Paſſion, and are in danger of deadly Falls: So that it will be neceſſary to ſhew what is to be done when under a preſent Temptation.

I. And here my chief Advice, and which, if duly practiſed, were ſufficient of itſelf, relates to the Beginnings of Temptations: And it is this; That as ſoon as ever any impure Thoughts ariſe in the Soul, they be inſtantly reſiſted and driven away. This is the moſt certain, and at the ſame time the eaſieſt Means of ſecuring ourſelves againſt Impurity.

1. It is the moſt certain Means, becauſe hereby Perſons preſerve themſelves infallibly from all the miſchievous Conſequences theſe firſt Motions might have. The firſt Moment almoſt wholly determines the Event of a Temptation; inaſmuch as if at firſt withſtood, it is uſually conquer'd; but if it be ſuffer'd and hearkened to for ever ſo little a time, it gains its point. The firſt reception of impure Thoughts into the Soul, ſhews them to be pleaſing to it; and the longer they are entertained there, the more this Pleaſure encreaſes; and when this Pleaſure once prevails, the Man is no longer in a capacity to defend himſelf. There is no ſurer way to prevent a Conflagration, than to put out the firſt ſpark of Fire; and it would be weakly done to let it kindle, in expectation of being able to exſtinguiſh it afterwards: So alſo in Sickneſs, the ſafeſt way is to provide early againſt them, and ſtop them at their firſt appearance.

2. I noted, That this Means is likewiſe eaſie. The firſt beginning of a Temptation, is the time when it is weakeſt; and by conſequence, it is then beſt dealt with. People complain of the ſtrength of Temptations, and the difficulty of

conquering them; but were it not for themſelves, they would neither be ſo ſtrong, nor ſo hard to be overcome. It is true, there is a great deal of trouble in encountring them, when they have been permitted to gather ſtrength; but it were no ſuch task to ſtrangle them in the birth, for then there needs but little force to oppoſe them, becauſe they are of little force themſelves.

But when theſe Beginnings are ſlighted, and wicked Thoughts are ſuffer'd to ſettle themſelves in the Soul, they ſoon get a great advantage over it. Impurity, together with Anger, is perhaps the firſt Paſſion which, above all the reſt, has the quickeſt Motions, and makes the ſpeedieſt Progreſs. Upon any the leaſt occaſion it captivates the Heart, ſo that the Man can neither argue againſt it, nor reſiſt it. It is a Fire which ſpreads itſelf with ſuch aſtoniſhing ſwiftneſs, that its firſt breaking out is ſcarce obſerved, before the whole Houſe is all in a Flame. It is an Enemy that by no means ſeems terrible at the firſt on-ſet, but which makes great advances by the leaſt favour is ſhewn it; inſomuch that if a Perſon does not reſiſt it at firſt, he will find himſelf overcome almoſt in the ſame inſtant wherein he is aſſaulted: So that we can never be too obſervant of the firſt ſtirrings of Luſt, to get them ſtifled immediately.

Now that it may appear the more diſtinctly how a Man ſhould manage himſelf in the firſt beginnings of a Temptation, I ſay, that he muſt forthwith turn away his Mind from impure Thoughts, without concerning himſelf with them, without ſtaying to conſider them, without weighing which ſide is to be choſen. If he ſtand to parly with his Luſt, he is in a fair way to be taken in its ſnares; for this ſhews him diſpoſed to hearken to them, at leaſt that he is not fully reſolved to reject them. We muſt therefore be ſure to get immediately at a diſtance from theſe

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ſort of Thoughts, to turn away inſtantly our Eyes, our Senſes, and our Minds from whatever we foreſee like to ſeduce us, and, in a word, to flee from it. Some Temptations are to be reſolutely encountred; but as to this, the ſafeſt way is to ſhun it; and the honourableſt Victory, is not by coming to grapple with the Enemy, but by avoiding the Combat. St. *Chryſoſtom* * alledges to this purpoſe the Example of *Job*; he notes, that this holy Man, who did not flee when *Satan* came to attack him, but enter'd the Liſts with this dangerous Enemy, fled however at what might poſſibly have prejudiced his Chaſtity; as theſe words teſtifie, *I have made a covenant with mine Eyes; Why then ſhould I look upon a Maid?* Job xxxi. 1.

Let us not flatter or deceive ourſelves, by imagining there is no great hurt in the beginnings of a Temptation, that theſe firſt Motions do not neceſſarily lead to the Sin, or, if they did, they might however be ſtopt by the way. This is a trick of the Paſſion, by which it deludes us; and they which have ſuch-like Thoughts, may learn, by their own experience, that nothing is vainer, or falſer. When a Man has given a Temptation time to grow ſtrong, he will not afterwards have it in his power to put a ſtop to it. So that the wiſeſt courſe he can take, is to have a great diſtruſt of himſelf, and not run the danger of a trial; but as ſoon as ever he perceives any irregular motion within himſelf, to fall immediately to his buſineſs, without heſitation, or much conſidering about it.

II. To this moſt important Advice, ſome others may be added.

1. The firſt is, Not to be diſcouraged, when aſſaulted by impure Thoughts. I do not mean,

* Serm. de Continen.

that they ſhould be look'd upon with an unconcernedneſs, and People ſhould give themſelves no trouble about them; for, on the contrary, they are to be reſolutely oppoſed, (as I have been proving:) But my Intention is, that Perſons ſhould not be diſheartned, and give over the deſign they had formed, of keeping themſelves clear of this Vice: They muſt not conceit it will be impoſſible to ſucceed in ſuch an Undertaking, nor that they are clearly forſaken of God: Their buſineſs is rather, to humble themſelves under a ſenſe of their own Corruption, and to reſiſt it, and then to hope in the Mercy and Affiſtance of the Lord.

2. Beſides, recourſe muſt be had, in times of Temptation, to holy Exerciſes, and Acts of Devotion. Short Ejaculations, whether only by raiſing up the Heart to God, or addreſſed to Him with the Mouth when one is alone, are very proper at ſuch a time. And though Perſons do not offer them up with Earneſtneſs and Freedom enough, which in truth is very difficultly done in the ſtate they are in at ſuch a time, and eſpecially when they are lukewarm and in trouble, they muſt not however fail to ſend them up as they can. It is likewiſe very uſeful under a Temptation, to turn the Mind to other Thoughts; for inſtance, to call to remembrance, that God ſees us, and is near to us; to think of our Lord, and his Sufferings; or of Death, and the Laſt Judgment, or any other of the great Motives to Chaſtity which have been already treated of: Recourſe alſo may be had to Reading, upon theſe Occaſions.

3. Not only Holy Exerciſes, but other things likewiſe of no great conſideration in themſelves, may ſerve to deliver us from the Temptations of Impurity; as, not to ſtay in the Place where we are, nor to take our eaſe, to apply ourſelves immediately

mediately to ſome ſort of buſineſs, or get into Company, or fall upon ſome Diſcourſe. A change of Poſture, or Motion of the Body, ſometimes ſuffices to prevent a train of evil Thoughts. There are ſome things that ſeem not worth minding, ſmall, and even contemptible, that yet are not without their uſefulneſs this way. But above all theſe Means, every one muſt conſult himſelf, and ſee what is like to make moſt impreſſion upon him.

And yet once more I muſt obſerve, That all this is to be done reſolutely and undauntedly. 1. In the firſt place, Men muſt not be diſcouraged either by their own Weakneſs, or their Backwardneſs to ſet about it. Though theſe Means are practiſed but imperfectly and unſteadily, this however will turn to ſome account, provided it be done ſincerely, and with Perſeverance. 2. Neither muſt they be affrighted at the Trouble they find in reſiſting the Allurements of Luſt. To this end let them remember for their Encouragement, that their Conflict will not be long, but if they can but hold out for a few Moments, they will preſently be ſafe, and the Storm allayed; and after this they will have the Satisfaction of having done their Duty, and will taſt an inward Peace rejoicing and ſtrengthening the Soul, and exciting them to a Performance of their Duty upon all other Occaſions that ſhall offer themſelves.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Aſſiſtance that may be had from Others in order to Chaſtity.

AFTER the Conſideration of what each one is to do in order to Chaſtity, I am next to ſhew what Helps to Virtue may be found in others. And this is ſo much the more neceſſary, becauſe this

this perhaps is the Means leaſt taken notice of, and moſt neglected.

I. Nor have we leſs need to be aſſiſtant to one another, in Matters of Salvation, than in thoſe of this Life. This mutual Help is one of the moſt indiſpenſable Duties of Charity; and as ſuch is often preſcribed by the Apoſtles. † *Exhort one another daily;* ‖ *let us conſider one another daily to provoke unto Love, and to good Works.*

† Heb. 3. 13.
‖ Heb. 10. 24.

Neither is it to be doubted, but it highly conduces to the promotion of Piety, and more particularly of Chaſtity, to partake of the Company and Diſcourſe of Virtuous Perſons. For as this Virtue is loſt by converſing with the Vicious and Debauched, ſo it is preſerved and improved by Communication of thoſe that fear God. The Example of ſuch is of great weight, and their Counſels of great force for purifying the Heart. Good Converſation is of inconceivable advantage, I mean ſuch Converſation where each Party ſpeaks with an Openneſs of Heart, and with Confidence, and Sincerity. And a Man does not leave ſuch Society without carrying ſome Fruit of it along with him.

2. The Scripture teaches likewiſe that we may aſſiſt each other with our Prayers. The greateſt part of Chriſtians have but little knowledge of the Efficacy of Prayer, and for want of Faith make little uſe of this Means, as taking it to be of no great ſervice to them. But it is moſt certain that * *the fervent Prayer of a Righteous Man avails much with God*; and he is always diſpoſed to beſtow his Favours, when ſincerely ſollicited in behalf of ſuch an one as greatly deſires them, and to this end deſires alſo the Interceſſion of other good Chriſtians for obtaining them. Whence I conclude that whoſoever deſires to overcome the Paſſions of the Fleſh, muſt beg the Help of his faithful Brethren, and particularly muſt entreat the Aſſiſtance of their Prayers.

* St. Ja. 5. 16.

3. But

3. But chiefly Others may help us by their Advice and Exhortations. It is not to be expressed of what advantage it is, to have a faithful Friend from whom to receive Counsel and Encouragement in time of need, and principally to such as have little Prospect of Success from their own single Endeavours. †*Wo to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up.* A Man is always in a woful Condition, and in danger of committing great Offences, when he consults none but himself, and relies solely upon his own Understanding. This is true in the things of this Life, and it is no less so in what concerns our everlasting Salvation. One of the chief Reasons why so few make any considerable Progress in Goodness is, because in Affairs of this nature People love to act separately, without asking others Advice, or being willing to be advised by any. But no where does this Observation hold more certainly than in the Case of Uncleanness. Persons will venture to discover something of their other Sins, but will not own this in the least; they are so ashamed of it, that this makes them reserved, and they very hardly prevail with themselves to take Advice concerning it, or to confess their Weakness. Or perhaps they cannot think of one of whom they may prudently ask Advice, or to whom they may disclose their Case, either as to this or any other Sin; this being what the greater part never once dream of. † Eccles. 4. 10.

Yet it is plain this would be an admirable Means of delivering ourselves from many Disturbances and Dangers. Some know not whether certain Actions are allowed or forbidden, and so for want of better Information, they venture, uncertain as they are, to do what perhaps is contrary to Chastity, and even infamous and sinful; and which had it not been evil in its own nature, would yet be so to them, because they act it doubtingly, and not

not of Faith. Others are ſenſible of their deplorable State, and have an intention to get out of it, and make ſome Attempts this way, but without Succeſs, becauſe they have none to aſſiſt them. Not to ſay any thing of thoſe who being guilty of Sins of Uncleanneſs, have need to conſult with ſuch as may inſtruct them, how to make amends for what they have done. Each of theſe has need of Aſſiſtance. A hidden Evil is always dangerous, but when diſcovered it is half cured. We may eaſily have taken notice of ſuch who, whilſt obſtinately reſolved not to ask Advice concerning the State of their Heart, keeping it cloſely to themſelves, have had no Reſt, nor been able to free themſelves from the Tyranny of their Paſſions; but who ſo ſoon as ever they have had the Courage to disburden their Conſciences, and make known what it was that troubled them, found themſelves inſtantly comforted and ſtrengthened, and thenceforward ſupplied with new Forces in order to their better Progreſs in Piety.

Why then are People ſo backward to make uſe of ſo beneficial a Remedy? Will they ſay they do not know to whom they may apply themſelves? The number of Wiſe-Men, and Men of Probity is not ſo ſmall but that ſuch may be found, either amongſt thoſe whom God has ordain'd to inſtruct others, and guide their Conſciences, or elſe amongſt Private Perſons. Or is it Shame that hinders their doing it? If ſo, in the firſt place, it is not neceſſary in all Caſes to diſcover what they are moſt averſe to having known, but there are ſecret Means and Methods of deſiring Advice and Counſel, without ſuch a Declaration. Beſides ſuppoſe by letting their Caſe be known, they venture ſome Shame and Confuſion of Face, is it not much prudenter and ſafer, and much better in all reſpects to diſcover a Diſtemper, than live in continual Torment by concealing it, and at length periſh

perish by it? He that has the Courage to make this acknowledgment, hereby shews himself to be affected with his Condition, and desirous to get out of it, and has in truth already made a good step towards his Conversion. As also the Sinner who is covered with Confusion in the Sight of God for his Faults, which he has committed, does not stand in such Awe of Men, nor is so fearful of exposing himself to some little Mortification.

II. Since we are treating of the Assistance that may be received from others, it must be noted that there are such to be found as may contribute considerably to the promoting of Chastity, I mean Publick Persons and Parents.

1. If those in Publick Stations would heartily set themselves to it, they might in a great measure suppress the Excesses of Impurity, and make the Manners of Christians much chaster than they are. Good Order both in Church and State would conduce very much to it. The Ministers of God's Word may employ themselves both in Publick, in giving good Instructions and frequent Admonitions concerning this Point, in their Sermons; and in Private, in exhorting zealously and prudently those who are backward to their Duty. Magistrates may also do great Service, by enacting wise and just Laws against this Sin; by an exact Observance and Execution of the Laws thus enacted; by not suffering those Places where Youth are corrupted, and accustomed to Play, to Riot, and to Debauchery; and in not bearing with those who are the Promoters of Leudness, and Corrupters of Youth, and who serve only to introduce Effeminacy, Wantonness, and Love of Pleasures. There are some places where the Magistrates make this their Business; and it were heartily to be wished, that all would do it every where.

2. Fathers and Mothers may also contribute much to the Chastity of Youth. If they would do what

what they can in their Families, and what it is not hard to do, there would not be ſo much Uncleanneſs in the World. This I have ſaid before, but cannot forbear repeating it. Parents ſhould bring up their Children in great Purity, and ſhould from their Infancy inſpire them as much as may be with a Senſe of Modeſty, even in the ſmalleſt Matters, and not ſuffer the leaſt Indecency amongſt them, nor allow them to ſay or do any thing contrary to Chaſtity. This might eaſily be done, and with good Succeſs, becauſe theſe Principles of Modeſty enter of themſelves into Childrens Minds, and when well imprinted there, ſerve thenceforward as for an excellent Preſervative from Impurity. Whereas if Children once grow careleſs in point of Modeſty, they ſeldom reſume it afterwards. Wherefore Parents ſhould take heed what Example they ſet their Children, that themſelves be pure, and extraordinarily circumſpect both in their Actions and in their Words; I ſay, not only to forbear all filthy Diſcourſe, which none will indulge themſelves in that are not utterly void of Virtue and Modeſty, but to refrain from whatſoever is a little too looſe, and never to laugh at any thing that has the leaſt relation to Impurity, but on the contrary to teſtify always their Diſlike and Averſion to whatever hurts Modeſty in any manner of way. Fathers and Mothers ſhould likewiſe teach their Children to mortify their Bodies and their Paſſions, to be contented with little, and always eaſy; they ſhould train them up in great Sobriety, and beware that Idleneſs and Sloth get not the poſſeſſion of them, nor a fondneſs for Pleaſures draw them aſide, and that they read no bad Books. And as they grow up, they ſhould ſtill keep them in a State of Dependance upon themſelves, and have their Eyes upon them, to ſee them well employed, and not let them be abroad at Night, and thoroughly to enform themſelves what Company they keep, and

what

what Places they frequent; and when they are put out, to take all poſſible Care that a Wiſe and Prudent Perſon have the inſpection over them.

CHAP. VIII.

Some Directions concerning the Uſe of theſe Means.

HAving directed to ſuch Means, and laid down ſuch Rules as are neceſſary in order to this Virtue of Chaſtity, I ſhall now apply myſelf, for a Concluſion of the Whole, to ſhew how they may be uſefully reduced to Practice, for the Inſtruction of thoſe who deſire to be benefited by them, and chiefly with a Deſign to make the Practice eaſy. For it is not ſufficient to ſay there are Means of being Chaſt, but it is more eſpecially needful to ſhew, that when uſed as they ought to be, there is no ſuch trouble as Men imagine in living Chaſtly. And what I have to add in this Chapter deſerves to be conſidered with more than ordinary Attention.

I. The firſt Advice I have to offer is, That each one make uſe of theſe Means according to the State he is in, there being Three States, in either of which he may be, in relation to Impurity.

1. There are ſome who have no Inclination to this Vice; or if they had would take care to keep themſelves free from it. Theſe have great reaſon to bleſs God; yet they ſhould not fail to make uſe of the Means here preſcribed, for ſettling themſelves the more firmly in this happy State. None ſhould be remiſs and unguarded, becauſe many times thoſe Paſſions preſs with great violence, out of the reach of which Perſons had thought themſelves. A moſt remarkable Example in this kind we have in King *Salomon*, who in his Younger Years was an unpar-

parallelled Example of Wiſdom and yet in the latter part of his Life gave way to an infamous Paſſion, and hereby left himſelf for a Warning to all the World, not excepting thoſe who have the leaſt Apprehenſion of falling after the ſame manner. But here it is alſo to be remembred, that ſuch who are not ſubject to this Paſſion, will find it no difficult matter to preſerve themſelves from it. It is with theſe as with Men in Health, who need only Foreſight and Obſervation, to keep themſelves ſo.

2. There are multitudes of Others, that have a deadly hankering after Impurity, and ſuffer themſelves to be ſometimes betrayed into it, but yet do not allow themſelves wholly in it, but ſtrive againſt it ſo far that they not only have eſcaped the Crime, but have never been brought to an entire Conſent of the Will to it, much leſs to a Habit of it. Thoſe of this ſecond Rank have more need of Direction than the former, and muſt take more Pains, and ſtrive harder to ſecure themſelves.

3. Laſtly, Some are Slaves to this Paſſion, in whom it reigns, and who have either ventured upon the Sin itſelf, or if not, are however commonly full of ſenſual Deſires, and defile both Soul and Body by their inordinate Actions, Words, and Thoughts. The Eſtate of theſe laſt is extremely deplorable, and very dangerous; and they have more need to conſider with themſelves, and make uſe of thoſe Remedies, which may recover them out of this Condition. I cannot better compare theſe, than to thoſe Sick Perſons whoſe Diſtemper is come to that height, that without a ſpeedy Medicine well applied, they muſt periſh. I do not deny but ſuch, who are thus impure both by Inclination and Cuſtom, will meet with difficulty in recovering themſelves, and will find, at firſt, their Sin very hard to be overcome: As all experience, who will undertake to conquer any ſtrong Paſſion, or any well-rooted Habit. Yet I have two things

to ſay, to prevent their ſuffering themſelves to be affrighted from it. The one, That this Difficulty will be of no long continuance, the trouble of doing it being worſt at the beginning, and growing afterwards more and more eaſie. The other, That this Work of their Converſion is not equally difficult at all times, but in ſome Circumſtances is eaſily effected; as I ſhall prove, in treating of the next Particular. Wherefore,

II. My other Advice is of ſuch importance, that I dare ſay it will conduce perhaps above all things to facilitate the Practice of the Duties we are now upon. There is no Time wherein Perſons ought not to uſe their utmoſt Endeavours for overcoming their Inclination to Impurity; but withal, there are ſome Times and Opportunities, wherein it is done far more eaſily than at others. In Matters of Salvation, aſwell as in all others, a great deal depends upon a choice of proper Seaſons. No body but muſt have found, that he is not always equally well diſpoſed: Upon ſome Occaſions, a thing will appear almoſt inſuperable, and it cannot be done then without great oppoſition; which yet will not be ſo at another time. Take a Man given to any particular Paſſion, and in the inſtant when he is ſeized and tranſported with it, all you can ſay to the contrary will make no impreſſion upon him: Yet take the ſame Man out of his Paſſion, and when his blood is cooled, and you will ſee him a very different ſort of Perſon. The Impure have their intervals, and theſe longer or ſhorter, and more or leſs frequent, according as the Habit they have contracted is ſtronger or weaker. There are ſome in whom this Paſſion bears ſuch abſolute ſway, that they are almoſt always employed by it; yet ſuch as theſe have ſome more favourable Moments wherein they are capable of Reflection, and wherein their Paſſion allows them ſome reſpite.

God, who is full of Goodneſs and Love to Mankind, and deſires the Salvation of Sinners, does not entirely forſake them. He ſpeaks to their Conſciences divers ways, and ſometimes they hear his Voice, and are affected with it; they begin to relent, they review the Miſcarriages of their paſt Converſation, and are humbled for them. The Preaching of God's Word, the Uſe of the Sacraments, the inward Operation of the Holy-Ghoſt, the Diſgrace they have ſuffered for their Folly, the appearance of ſome Object, and the Reflection they make at ſuch times when their Conſcience is awakened, may raiſe good Motions in them, they being then in an eſtate wherein to make good Reſolutions, and begin to put them in execution. This therefore is a valuable Opportunity, and may turn to very good account, by their doing then, what they are not like to do at another time.

But more eſpecially it concerns every one to make good Uſe of Times of Affliction. Afflictions, which are an excellent Means, and uſed as ſuch by God, for withdrawing Men from their Iniquities, have a particular efficacy for taming fleſhly Paſſions. And if there be any way to reclaim thoſe who have habituated themſelves to Impurity, theſe will do it, and they are alſo commonly the laſt Means God will try them with. For this cauſe therefore, he ſends Pains, and long and grievous Diſeaſes, which bring them to the very gates of the Grave, and at other times he expoſes them to Ignominy and Diſgrace. And it is obvious to obſerve, that when People are reduced to a ſtate of Affliction and Sufferings, the Fleſh loſes a good part of its Dominion. The Paſſions cannot but be calmed, when the Body and Soul are mortified by Grief. This therefore is a moſt beneficial Circumſtance in order to Converſion, and ought upon no terms to be neglected, any more than

than all thoſe other like Advantages we at any time meet with.

Sinners and Libertines ſometimes reaſon thus with themſelves. When the Precepts, the Counſels, and the Motives of the Evangelical Morality are laid before them, they ſay, All this is true, and they are well ſatisfied theſe Commands are juſt, and the Means produce their Effect, when made uſe of: That it is eaſie to reform themſelves, if they will heartily endeavour it; but the difficulty is, to make Perſons willing to amend, and uſe theſe Means: That the Inclination which hinders their taking this Reſolution, and prevents their Uſe of theſe Means, and draws them ſome other way, muſt firſt be rectified; and, in a word, That they want a Will to ſet about this Duty. Whereto I anſwer; God gives this Will; He allows Seaſons and Junctures, in which Men may eaſily be willing to reform; when both the Sinners find themſelves incited to do it, and beſides, God inſpires into them a Deſire of doing it. I ſay farther, They ought to make a good Improvement of theſe Junctures, and the good Diſpoſitions they find in themſelves at ſuch a time. I ſay again, If a Man take but a little Pains with himſelf, theſe favourable Circumſtances will ever and anon return, and he will not be long before he may have made a conſiderable advancement in Goodneſs. So that I can give no better Advice to ſuch as deſire to renounce their Impurity, than to take the advantage of thoſe Opportunities and Occaſions, wherein they are at liberty, and in a ſtate to make ſerious and uſeful Reflections.

III. Let not Perſons be diſcouraged at the Beginning. This Advice is highly neceſſary for all that have the misfortune to be under the power of Carnal Paſſions; becauſe they cannot hope to ſhake them off all at once, but will be in danger of ſome relapſes; ſo that if they ſuffer themſelves

to be worſted, it is certain they will never get free of them. It is not unuſual for People to have taken up good Reſolutions, and made ſome anſwerable Attempts, and to have concluded hereupon, that they had gained ſome advantage over themſelves; but yet theſe being but weak Attempts, they have no ſooner felt the returns of their Luſt, but they have preſently yielded to it, either through Surprize, or Negligence, and have been diſcouraged, and began to think they could never hope to rid themſelves of this Paſſion, and it was therefore in vain to ſtrive againſt it, and ſo have given over their Deſign, and grown as diſorderly and licentious as ever. But it was a great failing in them to be ſo eaſily repulſed: For Habits are not extirpated all at once; and if all that have undertaken to work out their own Converſion, had given over upon a relapſe, none of them poſſibly had ever been Converted. There is nothing of more pernicious conſequence, than to be thus eaſily diſcouraged: For when a Man's Courage is once caſt down, and he has taken up a perſuaſion that he ſhall not ſucceed, he will give over his Endeavours, and ſtrive no longer; he will be ſure to do well no longer, purely becauſe he thinks he cannot; and ventures to become a greater Slave to his Paſſions, than ever he had been before.

What a Chriſtian does for God and his own Salvation, ſhould be done with Reſolution and Confidence, and even with Joy. The weakeſt of them, and who have made the leaſt progreſs, ſhould perſuade themſelves, that their firſt Beginnings will be accepted with God, provided they be ſincere; and that though they do unhappily relapſe, they muſt yet beware of being diſheartned. It is a great happineſs, on the other hand, when our Falls make us uneaſie, when they teach us how far our Paſſions have got the maſtery of us, and what great reaſon we have to labour inceſſantly that we may

over-

overcome them, and may recover ourſelves out of the great Danger whereinto they had brought us. Theſe Falls muſt not be ſlighted or deſpiſed. But I muſt repeat it again; They muſt by no means diſhearten us, or take us off from what we were about: But rather we ſhould animate ourſelves the more, and ſtrive to get above them, and renew our former Reſolutions againſt them: Which if we do, our Gracious God will infallibly bleſs our Endeavours, and, for the Love of Chriſt, will pardon thoſe Falls which are not wilfully perſiſted in. Whereas, if we be diſcouraged and faint, we become a Prey to Temptations, and ſhall be involved in them more and more. A wiſe Man having happened to fall, would get up again and continue on his Journey; but he that ſhould chooſe to lie where he fell, without trying to riſe, would be deſervedly look'd upon as one who had loſt his Senſes.

I beſeech my Readers to put a favourable Conſtruction upon what I write, and not to miſinterpret what I have been diſcourſing. I have written it for the Encouragement of the Weak, ſuch I mean as act ſincerely, though with Weakneſs, and who meet with ſome ſucceſs in their Endeavours of Amendment. For what I ſay, relates not to thoſe who content themſelves with weak and imperfect Reſolutions of Amendment, without putting them in execution, and are ready, upon every Temptation, to recede from them. Theſe ſort of looſe and ineffectual Reſolutions are taken up by abundance of Perſons, who yet notwithſtanding periſh in their Impenitence.

IV. To be benefited by theſe Advices, it will be neceſſary to purſue them with Diligence and Perſeverance; and not carelelly, negligently, or only for a while: They muſt be follow'd heartily and earneſtly, this being the only Method of attaining to Virtue. Our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, and his

his Apoſtles, exhort us to *ſtrive that we may enter in at the ſtreight gate;* to *watch,* and *fight,* and *take pains:* But theſe Endeavours are eſpecially required, when we are to reſiſt ſuch Temptations as entice by Pleaſure, and, above all, at the Beginning, becauſe that is the Time when we are to expect the ſharpeſt Conflicts. The Spiritual Life begins with Pain and Grief, unleſs where Perſons have entred upon it in their Youth. When Men begin to think of returning, and taming the Fleſh, and bringing it into ſubjection to the Spirit, and the Bonds which now tie us to Pleaſures begin to be broken, then it is that we ſuffer moſt, then it is that the Fleſh revolts, and that we have need of ſtriving to get the maſtery over it. Afterwards our Work becomes much eaſier; and the greater progreſs we make, the more does the oppoſition of the Fleſh abate, and the weaker do the Paſſions grow; till we come by degrees to do well without oppoſition, and with Delight.

Till Perſons are come to this ſtate, they muſt ſet themſelves to work, and never give over. It is only by Perſeverance, that advantage can be made of the Means which are appointed in order to Chaſtity. It is not to be imagined that theſe Means will at once produce all the Good that may be hoped for from them; and which they effect only gradually, and by little and little. It is likewiſe only by Perſeverance, that long and ſettled Habits are to be rooted out. Many have undertaken, and with ſome ſincerity, to depart from their Impurity, and have ſoon returned to it; becauſe they have not attended to this Advice. They began happily enough; they endeavour'd, for ſome time, to mortifie their Paſſions, and with ſome ſucceſs; but for want of perſevering as they had begun, loſt the fruit of all they had done.

V. Theſe Means muſt be exactly purſued, and with a circumſpection reaching to the ſmalleſt matters.

matters. It is not to be thought that any Counſels or Helps to Chaſtity may be neglected. Nor may any fanſie it enough to be exact in the Duties and Counſels which are of greateſt conſequence, and to abſtain from what is ſinful, or manifeſtly leads to Sin; and that he may ſlight thoſe Counſels which appear of leſs importance, and take his full liberty in leſſer matters. In the caſe of Chaſtity, there is nothing wherein Perſons muſt not be nicely punctual; nor may they gratifie or excuſe themſelves in any thing that is detrimental to Virtue, nor neglect any thing of all that may capacitate them to acquire or preſerve it.

In all the Paſſions, but chiefly in this, regard muſt be had to leſſer matters; becauſe little things lead to greater. By light Faults, a Man comes to great Sins; and the Obſervation of leſſer Duties, may be a Means of leading to the higheſt degree of Virtue. Often-times there needs only a want of Watchfulneſs over ourſelves: A Look, a Deed, or a Word a little too wanton, a light Compliance with the Fleſh, or other things of this nature, which ſeem to have no great harm in them; there needs nothing more, I ſay, to overturn the Soul, and kindle the Fire of Luſt, and this too in a very little time. And again, we as often need only to be attentive and circumſpect in relation to ſome things in appearance of little conſideration, to preſerve ourſelves pure and quiet. A ſmall matter, and which is next to nothing, by the way of ſpeaking it may occaſion fatal Miſcarriages; and ſometimes again, a very little matter may ſerve to defend againſt Temptations. Beſides, when People overlook the leaſt Duties, and accuſtom themſelves to violate them wilfully and without heſitation, they expoſe themſelves to the danger of taking the ſame liberty with thoſe of the higheſt importance. So that to this purpoſe may be applied what our Lord ſays,

St. *Luke*

St. *Luke* xvi. 10. *He who is faithful in that which is leaſt, is faithful alſo in much*; and what we read in *Eccleſiaſticus* xix. 1. *He who deſpiſeth ſmall things, ſhall fall by little and little.* And yet nothing of all that may conduce to ſo great and ſo excellent an End, as is our Supreme Felicity, deſerves to be accounted ſmall, or of little importance.

Theſe are the principal Means that are to be made uſe of, in order to our becoming Chaſt, and with which I conclude this Treatiſe. And thoſe who will give a ſerious Attention to the Conſiderations I have offer'd concerning both *Uncleanneſs* and *Chaſtity*, may make good Uſe of them. But ſuch over whom a fooliſh and brutal Paſſion has more Power than all Arguments from Religion, their Duty, and their Intereſt, will leave themſelves without excuſe. God grant I may not have labour'd in vain in what I have written, but that my weak Endeavours may ſerve to inſpire all that ſhall read this Diſcourſe with the Love and hearty Deſire of Chaſtity.

FINIS.

Miss Hyde